



EVIL EMPEROR'S WILD CONSORT

BOOK 03

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Evil Emperor's Wild Consort

(废柴要逆天：魔帝狂妃)

by

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Synopsis

She has come a long way.

Orphaned, born a weakling, and being the infamous good-for-nothing of Azure Dragon Country. Gu Ruoyun was the shame of the proud Gu household. Falsely accused of a crime she did not commit, she was betrayed by her family and beaten to death by her own grandfather. But life took a fateful twist on that very day — she was revived.

Newly awakened, she is now the Master of an ancient treasure that resides within her body. Precious cultivation pills, treasures beyond her wildest imagination and spiritual beasts, all within her grasp... She is the apple of the eye of all under the heavens, including that of a mysterious, handsome man.

Now she only has one goal — to conquer the world.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 201: What Goes Around Comes Around (3)

Facing General Luo, Gu Ruoyun's expression calmed down but just as she was about to speak, her sharp eyes noticed an elegant figure who was standing a distance away from them.

She was as elegant as before and her exquisite makeup covered her original pale complexion. A trace of anger instantly flashed through Gu Ruoyun's expression as she observed this woman.

That woman was still alive!

She had sent the Azure dragon out and yet she still lives! This was unfair! A woman as evil as her still roaming the earth, it was totally ridiculous!

"Greetings, Your Imperial Highness."

Concubine Ling smiled as she walked towards Leng Moxuan's side politely. "I heard that there was a person who wanted to assassinate Your Imperial Highness so I've come to see who that foolhardy person was!"

As she said this, her eyes swept over Gu Ruoyun. The coldness and elegance of her beautiful face shot out a stream of evil at her.

"Concubine Ling?"

A cold pair of eyes glared at Concubine Ling's arrogant face. Gu Ruoyun laughed coldly, "You've arrived just in time! You had bribed the Dark Yin Palace and ordered them to assassinate me. However, they only ended up hurting the people close to me and even kidnapped a child to threaten me. As the person behind all this, how do you plan to settle this debt?"

Concubine Ling's facial expression changed as she stared at Gu Ruoyun with hatred. She then turned to look at Leng Moxuan, timidly saying, "Your Imperial Highness, I have been wronged. All

these years, all I did was to help Your Imperial Highness manage the Imperial Harem so how would I have the time to plan all this? It's obvious that Gu Ruoyun thinks that it was not enough to murder my father and my nephew! She now wants to annihilate the entire Ling family! Such an evil woman should be chopped up into a thousand pieces and left to die without a complete corpse! If not, there would be no one else in Azure Dragon Country who can deal with her. She even dares to look down on you!"

All these words completely seeped into Leng Moxuan's heart.

He laughed coldly, "General Gu, General Luo, what are the both of you still waiting for? Arrest this woman!"

"Understood!"

General Gu looked at Gu Ruoyun cruelly as he smirked. "Gu Ruoyun, it's not me who wants you dead this time. You've crossed the line, don't blame me for not thinking of our blood ties."

He then ordered his soldiers to surround Gu Ruoyun.

General Luo hesitated and did not heed the order.

In that moment, Leng Moxuan raged, "General Luo, you're really brave. You dared to not heed Our order! Do you not want to be a general anymore?"

Thud!

General Luo knelt down heavily on one knee and clutched his military seal in one hand. He said with a lowered head, "Your Imperial Highness, Gu Ruoyun is my only niece. Even if we aren't related, I still believe what she had said. It was Concubine Ling's fault to begin with. If Your Imperial Highness still wants to arrest her, it would be hard for me to follow your orders. It was wrong for Gu Ruoyun to barge into the Imperial Palace but she was not the only one who was wrong. Your Imperial Highness should question her and deal with Concubine Ling! A prince and a normal citizen committing the same crimes should be treated the same

even if they are a concubine! If Your Imperial Highness does not give an explanation, I'll gladly hand over my military seal and return to my hometown!"

It was obvious that General Luo's actions proved that no matter what, he will stand on Gu Ruoyun's side.

"Very well!!" Leng Moxuan laughed, "General Luo, since you have made such a decision, I shall honor it. General Gu, take this military seal. From now onwards, Azure Dragon Country will only have one general and that is you."

Chapter 202: What Goes Around Comes Around (4)

In the past, the military seal had been divided into two parts in order to give both the right-and left-hand general equal power. However, this bastard had ended up betraying Us! He's asking for death!

"Yes, Your Imperial Highness!."

General Gu was overjoyed and quickly walked forward to take the military seal. As he looked at both parts, he almost could not help but laugh loudly.

He had been rivals with Luo Hongtian for so many years but he has finally lost to General Gu all because of that little b*tch! From now on, Azure Dragon Country will only have him as the general!

"General Luo, was it worth it?" Gu Ruoyun looked at General Luo who was still kneeling and softly asked.

"Yun'er, I'm not General Luo anymore, you can just call me 'Uncle Luo'." General Luo laughed bitterly and said, "A man's word carries weight. Three years ago, I saw that you were not just a simple girl! I was afraid that you might endanger Azure Dragon Country, that was why I had said those words but I've sworn the same. If Azure Dragon Country has wronged you first, then Uncle Luo will stand by you. Thus, I had to hand over my military rights yet it is not the power I'm sad to part with but the brothers whom I've once fought alongside with! Even so, I have no regrets!"

"Haha! " Leng Moxuan heard this and started laughing with His eyes blazing. "Azure Dragon Country had wronged her first? What did We wrong her with? Luo Hongtian, are you saying that We are in the wrong? In this world, no one has ever said such a thing! No matter what Concubine Ling had done, only We can ask her about her crimes. Who are you to ask such a thing? General Gu, what are

you waiting for, arrest this woman immediately!"

His voice rang out with authority and General Gu waved his hand with a single command to kill. In that moment, all the soldiers charged at Gu Ruoyun with killing intent.

All of them surrounded her but the green-clothed girl did not waver at all, her eyes only looked coldly at the weapons raised against her.

Bang!

Suddenly, a strong wave of energy exploded from her body and a violent wind blew. All who were caught in it did not react in time and were sent flying. Following this, the girl's dominant battle cry rang loudly in the Imperial garden under the sunset!

"Who's next?!"

Leng Moxuan had been in control of the situation at first. No matter what Gu Ruoyun was capable of, she had yet to reach the level of power to fend off ten thousand soldiers. He has tens of thousands under his control so even if they ended up being casualties, it would cost her life eventually.

However, this woman seems to be much stronger than He had imagined.

If a person like this was not under his command, then... they could only die!

Concubine Ling walked a few steps forward as her pale face looked at Gu Ruoyun. She clenched her teeth tightly and her eyes were filled with viciousness. If this woman did not die, she would never be able to sleep peacefully in the future...

"Gu Ruoyun, I offer you another chance to surrender yourself. If not, don't blame me for not giving you a chance!" General Gu looked coldly at Gu Ruoyun.

Gu Ruoyun's hair danced wildly under the violent winds,

accentuating the rage on her face. She raised her eyebrows and coldly said, "The Gu family does not have to wait for long. After I'm done with Concubine Ling, the next in line is the Gu family..."

"How ambitious!" General Gu guffawed. " You were under the protection of Elder Yu before this so I could not kill you but right now, who is here to protect you?"

Whoosh!

With that, General Gu pulled out his weapon and charged towards Gu Ruoyun.

Chapter 203: What Goes Around Comes Around (5)

Even though he was not a high-ranked cultivator, he was still a Martial General. Therefore, although Gu Ruoyun was also a Martial General, he could still hold his own against her with all his years of experience. He also had the Imperial Army at his beck and call. In fact, he believed that he could easily take on Gu Ruoyun.

But Gu Ruoyun only glared back at General Gu who was full of confidence...

With just that one glance, he heard a 'bang' and felt a strong surge of energy through his mind. After the strong energy had rushed through him, that frail body of his did not heed his command and he was thrown away, smashing into the crowd.

That arrogant General Gu had been defeated by a girl with just one move?

Leng Moxuan tightly clenched His fists, His palms were full of sweat and His handsome and serious face was full of panic. If this girl could defeat General Gu with just a single move, it proves that her power was now totally out of His expectations.

"This... how can this be?"

The old general had regained consciousness and his elderly face was full of a hideous expression. He had been defeated by a good-for-nothing in such a public place. Where could he even hide his face now?

But thinking about that horrifying power from the girl just now, General Gu did not dare to make any sudden movements anymore...

Whoosh!

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

At that moment, a series of footsteps came from nearby and everyone looked over to see Elder Yu running and leading people from the Hundred Herb Hall with him.

When Leng Moxuan saw those people, He could not help but feel happy. He had not known how to deal with this at first but people from the Hundred Herb Hall have arrived so they should know what to do with their misbehaving underling! Gu Ruoyun was trained at the Hundred Herb Hall so no matter what, she had to obey them.

But Elder Yu did not wait for them to speak. He walked towards Gu Ruoyun and asked anxiously, "My Lady, are you alright?"

My Lady?

Not only Leng Moxuan, even the people around them were stunned.

If they did not hear wrongly, had the Martial King leveled Elder Yu just referred to Gu Ruoyun as 'My Lady'?

"I'm alright." Gu Ruoyun shook her head and said, "Elder Yu, I need you to handle what's about to come. Azure Dragon Country needs a new Emperor. If you have anyone in mind, please help them ascend the Imperial Throne."

"Yes, My Lady," addressed Elder Yu politely as he put his fists together.

At that moment, General Gu's face froze as he looked at Gu Ruoyun's expressionless face. He began to shiver and his face turned pale. He said as he shook his head, "How could this be? That year, she had not entered the Hundred Herb Hall as a servant but... as Elder Yu's Master? What was Gu Ruoyun capable of to turn a Martial King into her servant? The Gods must be blind! Such an unfilial granddaughter should be struck by lightning!"

He did not dare and did not want to believe what he had just witnessed. If all of this was real... he would fall apart!

"How dare you?!"

Leng Moxuan has recovered from His shock and clenched His teeth, "What power does the Hundred Herb Hall have to remove me from the Imperial Throne? Are you not afraid of breaking the law?"

Gu Ruoyun smiled as she stood in the middle of everyone. Her green robes billowed around her and her eyes shone with a prideful glimmer.

Actually, before she had come to the Imperial Palace, she had already asked Shopkeeper Zhao to inform Elder Yu of her plans.

Right now, she was already fully-fledged so it was time to let people know that she was the true owner of the Hundred Herb Hall! It was to instill fear so that others would not dare to attack her... and she wanted to make General Gu realize how wrong his decision has been that year.

Chapter 204: What Goes Around Comes Around (6)

During the past three years, she had been developing her power so right now, it was time to reveal everything...

"Yunyao, Tianqiong!"

The girl raised her head and calmly said, "The both of you and the rest of Hundred Herb Hall, deal with this."

Just as she spoke, two jets of light, one white and one green, shot out and met in the middle of the air before dispersing suddenly.

Concubine Ling saw the Azure Dragon circling in the sky and her face changed. She thought that Gu Ruoyun had been spared because the Azure Dragon had broken the promise but she had not expected that the Azure Dragon would have become tamed by her.

No!

She covered her mouth, stumbling back a few steps with shock and despair in her beautiful eyes.

Gu Ruoyun noticed her movement and smiled, "That's right, I've yet to thank you. If not for you, Yunyao and Tianqiong would never have been reunited and I would not have gained such a useful ally!"

Even though the Azure Dragon's power was greatly diminished, using the Divine Beast as a scare tactic was not a bad idea. When the people from the Imperial Palace saw the giant dragon that covered the earth and the sky, they were shocked to the point of not daring to move...

"The Azure Dragon, Tianqiong?"

Leng Moxuan's face turned pale. If he did not hear wrongly, Gu Ruoyun had called the Azure Dragon 'Tianqiong'.

"The Azure Dragon, Tianqiong, I've read about it in the ancient books before... it is said that this dragon is very powerful. Those who have tamed it would become the Emperor of the entire mainland!"

Being the Emperor of the entire mainland was different from being the Emperor of a country. The former was a powerful person who could bend everyone on the mainland to their will!

What had He done? How did He end up facing such an enemy?

He had made a wrong decision, a really bad decision!

A person who could make Tianqiong willingly serve them was under the protection of the God of Luck. Such a person would be at the peak of humanity but simply because He had wanted to save face, He had mistakenly ordered for her to die...

If He had known this earlier, never mind His price or His Emperor's power, He would have given it all away!

It's easy to feel sorry for Leng Moxuan. After all, Gu Ruoyun had rushed into the Imperial Palace after taming the Azure Dragon at the Ling family household. How could He have known that Tianqiong had become the young woman's mount?

Of course, the one who was feeling even more regret was Concubine Ling.

If she had not begged the Azure Dragon to kill this woman, she would have never have had the opportunity to tame him... She could not understand why the Azure Dragon, which was such a noble spiritual beast, would bow to such a vicious woman.

"Do you despise me?"

Gu Ruoyun looked at Concubine Ling's vicious eyes while smiling softly, "Sadly, you can only hate me and there are many who hate me, not just you! Elder Yu, take care of the rest. I don't want to see her live but I also don't want to see her die quickly either."

With that, she turned and walked to Luo Hongtian's side, "Uncle Luo, what do you plan to do next?"

Luo Hongtian laughed bitterly, " I can't remain in Azure Dragon Country anymore. I'll decide as I go."

Gu Ruoyun thought for a while before suggesting, "Maybe you would like to help me, Uncle Luo?"

"If you need me, I will help."

Luo Hongtian smiled. He had thought that Gu Ruoyun would send him to the Hundred Herb Hall to help out but little did he know, she was thinking about other things.

"Right, little girl, I'd like to know what kind of power level you are at."

Gu Ruoyun rubbed the tip of her nose as she said, "I reached the rank of a Martial General by luck last night."

After that, under Luo Hongtian's dazed look, she walked without a care out of the Imperial Palace's front gate...

Chapter 205: Karma (1)

"Have you all heard, the actual owner of the Hundred Herb Hall is that good-for-nothing Gu Ruoyun who had been chased out by the Gu family!"

"Tsk, tsk. No one would have thought that girl who had been bullied by everyone would blossom and grow to this stage. I wonder how much the Gu family is regretting it now! Haha, in only just three years, she has managed to go from Qi Collection Level 2 to become a Martial General, even Gu Tian was not so talented."

"That's nothing compared to what I had personally had witnessed in front of the Ling household. Have you ever seen the White Tiger with her speed and power? And the Azure Dragon who had taken up half the sky! With these two great spiritual beasts in her pocket, even if Gu Tian was a genius, he could never match his daughter's capabilities..."

Ever since that incident, Gu Ruoyun's name has spread across the entire Azure Dragon Country. Of course, she was different from where she had been three years ago. As of today, she was an exemplary person whose example every parent would ask their daughter to aspire to be...

If one would say that one did not know the Emperor's name in the Azure Dragon Country, that would be understandable. However, if one has never heard of Gu Ruoyun, one will be looked down upon! If one does not know who she was, how dare one call oneself a citizen of Azure Dragon Country?

Other than she, who had dared to call out the Dark Yin Palace? Other than she, who had dared to slaughter her way into the Imperial Palace? Even if one had power, they would not have the audacity that she had.

In addition to that, most people said that the reason behind Gu

Ruoyun's wrath was because Imperial Concubine Ling had sent assassins after her who had ended up hurting her servant girl. However, she ended up avenging that servant girl and completely ignored the consequences! It was all for a quick vengeance and grace!

This moment, in the Gu house, a group of servants was gossiping about that day's incident. The beautiful face of a lady nearby suddenly twitched as she tightly clutched onto her sleeves. Her teeth were clenched so tightly to the point of almost breaking them.

"Shut your mouth, you wretched scum!"

Her eyes were filled with rage as she spoke: "If I ever hear the words Gu Ruoyun again, I will kill the one who had uttered it! Even with her achievements now, she will never be rid of the reality that she had been chased out by the Gu family!"

The group of gossiping servants was silenced and timidly stood aside. They did not dare to utter a single word...

Gu Panpan was filled with rage today and needed someone to vent at. Hence, these few servants ended up becoming the target of her vicious mouth.

"And don't you all forget, you all had a part in bullying Gu Ruoyun back then! If she wants to avenge herself, you would all be done for. I will not allow you to speak words of praise for her. If you want to talk about her, you have to refer to her as a good-for-nothing like you did before!"

Unacceptable!

She was really dissatisfied how such a good-for-nothing from three years ago had managed to cause her so much despair!

The Gods were really unfair; Gu Ruoyun was rebellious and had even dared to harm her own grandfather. She should have died for her crimes and be struck by lightning!

One should know that after Gu Ruoyun had slaughtered her way into the palace, General Gu, who had brought tens of thousands of soldiers to aid the Emperor had been captured by Elder Yu and has yet to return to the Gu household. After losing the very backbone of the Gu family, how could she be worried?

As a breeze blew past the ancient tree in the yard. Its dense leaves covered a dark silhouette in black robes. The sunlight shone on a black mask, reflecting a cold glint.

The man stood with his hands behind his back and his thin lips were slanted. As he stared with cold eyes at the girl who was throwing a tantrum, a killer intent flashed through his eyes...

He had not expected that so much would have happened within these few days when he had left to settle some pressing matters.

Chapter 206: Karma (2)

Imperial Concubine Ling...

The masked man's eyes darkened as he thought of the woman who had caused so much trouble. Too bad she had died quickly. If not, he would definitely have made her experience hell on earth and take pleasure in spreading her ashes!

Obviously, the Gu family will not be that lucky!

The masked man suddenly narrowed his eyes as he thought of the past misdeeds of the Gu family. Under the mask, his handsome face was filled with killing intent.

Therefore, before Gu Panpan could finish cursing Gu Ruoyun, she sensed a black shadow which dashed across vision before countless kicks and punches landed on her...

"He--"

--lp...

Before she could make a sound, the agony caused her to not even be able to cry out in pain.

She felt as if every bone in her body was being crushed before it was quickly reconstructed. This cycle repeated over and over again, it made her want to die...

The servants also could not react and call for help. All they felt was a darkening in their minds before they all fainted away.

"I want to kill you but the Gu family's life is not for me to take. You owed her a great debt, I'm simply collecting the interest on her behalf."

The man applied just enough strength to make Gu Panpan suffer continuously. Her mind was refreshed just enough to suffer through the pain. She wished for the torment to be over.

It almost seemed like a century had passed and when she could

no longer bear it, the man finally relented. Following that, freed from the torturous pain, Gu Panpan finally fainted...

...

Gu Ruoyun ignored the speculations and gossips from the outside world. She continued to cultivate day after day and turned down anyone who came to visit.

Of course, that mischievous Fourth Prince had been turned down countless of times.

Gu Ruoyun was in the middle of her cultivation when the assassin from the Gentle Breeze Faction, Li Cheng finally contacted her.

"Master, I've been observing Second Master Gu recently. I eavesdropped on a conversation between Second Master Gu and Second Madam Gu. A great power had noticed Gu Shengxiao and wanted to take him away but Gu Tian and his wife disagreed. That power had held a grudge so they ordered Second Master Gu to harm them! They went so far as to force Second Master Gu to bring Gu Shengxiao to him. Unfortunately, Second Master Gu could not complete that mission. Recently, he wanted to mislead Gu Shengxiao and use you as bait to lure him out so that he could hand Gu Shengxiao that powerful person..."

Bang!

A surge of rage consumed Gu Ruoyun's heart. Her face was terrifyingly calm but her clear eyes seemed to have hurricanes in them.

She could tolerate whatever the Gu family had done but if they had harmed those who were close to her, that was unforgivable!

Second Master Gu had not only harmed her parents, he even wanted to harm her brother. No matter the cost, she could not let their conspiracy succeed!

"Gu family, I'd wanted to let you all live on for a little while

longer but sadly..."

Gu Ruoyun laughed coldly and said with a mocking attitude, "It's all of you who are looking to die!"

In her previous life, she had not been able to protect her mother. Even her own brother who had relied on her had been killed in front of her very eyes. She would not make the same mistakes in this life! Whoever touches her family, she would use their blood to wash doors!

"Li Cheng, wait there, I will go over now."

Gu Ruoyun's body emanated a strong killing intent. However, before she could leave, a shout sounded from outside.

"Gu Ruoyun, you b*tch, come out! Not only is he your grandfather, even if he was just an ordinary old man, you should not treat him like that! Where is your conscience? Did a dog eat it? B*tch, are you not afraid that the Gods would smite you for all that you've done? Your grandfather should have choked you to death when you were born, you little b*tch!"

Chapter 207: Karma (3)

Outside the compound, within a noisy crowd, an angry middle-aged man emerged and looked at the woman who was slowly making her way out. His eyes were on fire but he did not dare to step into the compound.

It was not only him who did not dare to do so, even the people from the Dark Yin Palace could not break the formation. He dared not try to chance it.

At that moment, Wei Yiyi stared coldly at the man who looked a lot like an angry clown. Her red lips curled up into a mocking smile as if she completely looked down upon this man.

Then, Wei Yiyi turned around and saw Gu Ruoyun walking towards them calmly. She raised her eyebrows and slowly walked over, "Master, let me deal with this. I've been angry with this bunch of blinded people for a long time now!"

Luckily for her, she had good eyes and had followed Gu Ruoyun from way earlier on. If not, she would probably also be on the hit list...

"Gu Ruoyun, you b*tch, you've captured your own grandfather! That's an act of rebellion. Even if your grandfather may have made mistakes, with him being the elder, you have to tolerate him. Instead, look at what you've done. Let's not forget that without your grandfather, there would not be you. Little b*tch, I've never seen such an ungrateful little b*tch like you, are you not afraid of being struck down by heaven?"

Outside the courtyard, Second Master Gu's heckling voice sounded again.

Gu Ruoyun stopped in her tracks as she stared coldly at Second Master Gu and smirked. With her cold eyes, her face seemed to be enraptured by mist.

"My grandfather?" She laughed coldly, "Does he deserve such a title? That year, he had ended up beating me to death. Ever since then, he was no longer my grandfather and he does not deserve that title! Especially now that I've left the Gu family, I'm no longer related to any of you."

She walked forward a few steps as she was saying this and her aura began to surround Second Master Gu. She said in an eerily cold voice, "If he was truly my grandfather, even though I had not committed anything wrong, would he have pushed all the blame onto my head and even beat me to death? If he was truly my grandfather and he knew that the Weapon Refining Sect wanted my life, would he have used his name as an elder to deliver me to the Weapon Refining Sect? If he was truly my grandfather, how could he think of every way possible to kill me?!"

Second Master Gu froze because he knew that the one who was in the wrong was his father. However, until now, he still wanted to guilt-trip her into releasing General Gu.

"Yun'er, your grandfather is old and foolish, that was why he had made those mistakes. Do you still want to hold a grudge against him? No matter what it was that he had done wrong, his blood still runs in your veins. Could you not release him?"

In that moment, everyone was stunned by Second Master Gu's shamelessness. No one had thought that even until now, the Gu family would try to guilt-trip her.

If Gu Ruoyun was a lonely and weak girl, they could probably get their way and she might even lose her life! But, she was powerful now and had managed to slowly climb her way up to where she is today...

Gu Ruoyun laughed with a hint of arrogance, "I, Gu Ruoyun, cherish my life. Whoever wants to die, I will let them die, no matter who it is! Plus, no matter what I've done in the past, I'm better than you who had killed his own brother. What right do you

have to educate me?

Her voice was like thunder in the sunny skies, Second Master Gu was clearly stunned.

How did this girl know that Gu Tian had been murdered by him? No! That's impossible! No one else knew other than him and his wife!

Chapter 208: Karma (4)

She was probably trying to trick him, he thought. That's right, it has to be that.

Second Master Gu tried to convince himself of Gu Ruoyun's trickery as he tried to calm himself down. He asked with a pale face, "What proof do you have? What right do you have to say that I had killed my own brother? I had so much brotherly love for him, I could never do such a thing!"

"Was that so?"

Gu Ruoyun's smile grew even more pronounced but her calm eyes remained the same.

"Actually, I had known long ago that my parents' deaths were related to you but I did not know why. Today, I finally found out that it had been because of my elder brother Gu Shengxiao. Someone wanted him so you killed my parents! Gu Qing, am I right?"

Gu Qing was Second Master Gu's real name. When he heard what Gu Ruoyun's had just said, his face changed and his eyes were filled with shock. However, he quickly regained his composure and he retorted while clenching his teeth, "I don't know what you're talking about! Gu Ruoyun, you've used so many underhanded methods just to cause trouble for the Gu family. How dare you even say such things?! You're downright shameless!"

As long as he refuses to admit it, even if this she knew all of it, it was useless.

She does not have any proof!

"Gu Qing, did you think that I had waited until this day to expose everything, just because I did not have proof?" Gu Ruoyun raised her eyes and her calm gaze fixed upon Gu Qing's pale face, "You are wrong, I've waited till this day to find out who had really been

involved in this, who was guilty, who was innocent and who deserve to be punished. I want to know what sort of deep hatred you had for my father! Proof? Why do I, Gu Ruoyun, need proof to act? Those who need to be killed will be killed! That's right, I do not have the proof to convince other people but so what? All I need to know is that I will have no regrets!"

Even though the girl's voice was calm, it was vicious and impacted everyone's hearts.

Compared to the wretched Gu Qing, it was obvious that Gu Ruoyun's words were more believable.

So what if there was no proof? If she did things without making her heart feel guilty, there was no need for proof!

"I didn't know that the Gu family's Gu Qing was so evil, he had even dared to kill his own elder brother! Tsk, tsk. It's shameful that such a person would even dare to teach others about respecting their elders, especially since Gu Tian was elder! An elder brother is like a second father, was his way not any different from patricide?"

"Gu Tian was such a genius, sadly he had passed on so young and became a regret in everyone's hearts. If Gu Tian was still alive, the Gu family would not have ended up in such a state. Also, if Gu Tian was still here, even if Gu Ruoyun was a good-for-nothing, no one would have dared to treat her badly!"

"Hmph, the Gu family had Gu Tian killed. How dare they ask someone to forgive them? I think Gu Ruoyun is right, if one still had their conscience, they would avenge their own parents! How did Gu Qing still have the right to come find her?"

The spectators outside the courtyard start discussing all at once. They looked at Gu Qing's eyes that had no hint of shame. Some even spat at him while cursing.

It was well known that Gu Tian was a hero in many people's

hearts! But, this hero had trusted his family too much and had ended up being killed by this wretched scum. How could they not feel angry?

"All of you, don't trust her words, Please don't trust her. All of her claims are not true, they are false!!!!"

Gu Qing went berserk and his hair came undone and fell into a mess on his face. In the chaos, there was viciousness in his eyes, "Gu Ruoyun, you are only a little b*tch and will die horribly, hahaha! One day, the Gods will deal with you!"

Chapter 209: Karma (5)

"Gu Qing, don't you want me to release Master Gu?" Gu Ruoyun laughed and her smile was full of deceit, "I can do as you've begged and release him. However, I hope you won't regret it... Wei Yiyi, tell Elder Yu to release the old man!"

Upon hearing Gu Ruoyun's command, Wei Yiyi did not hesitate. She knew that after the old man had returned home, there would be drama...

As for them, they just needed to sit and watch that drama unfold.

...

The Gu family home was in chaos.

The sorry-looking old man has yet to wash up but was interrupted by voices of rage from outside.

"Hey, the cowardly Gu family! Are you all trying to be tortoises and hiding in your shells? Call Gu Qing out, he was the criminal responsible for murdering Gu Tian! Gu Tian has helped me before, I'm here to demand justice!"

"A hero like Gu Tian dying is a loss to the people of Azure Dragon Country and even the whole mainland! The one who had caused this kind of loss was Gu Qing, that mongrel! He's a criminal of Azure Dragon Country! If Gu Tian was here, who else would have dared to invade Azure Dragon Country? Would there even be war?"

Ever since Gu Qing had retrieved Master Gu from Gu Ruoyun, all that had happened at the courtyard spread like wildfire. Some of those who had been on good terms with Gu Tian immediately came over under the instructions of the Hundred Herb Hall.

It was obvious that these people still believed in Gu Ruoyun.

With her power, she could deal with the Gu family anytime. Plus,

based on her previous behavior, she was not a reasonable person! If she wanted someone dead, no matter who you were, she would kill you immediately. Thus, with her behavior, it would not be wronging the Gu family.

Plus, the puny Gu family was not worth her effort.

Master Gu was stunned, he had left the Hundred Herb Hall and hurried straight back, not aware of the discussion in the capital. However, after hearing the rumors circulating outside, he angrily slapped Gu Qing and shouted in rage, "Gu Qing, were you the one responsible for the death of Tian'er?"

Of course, Master Gu was not someone who placed great importance on relationships, otherwise, he would not have used a stranger's skeleton and pretended that it had belonged to Gu Tian.

It was only because, if Gu Tian had not died, he would still be the Master Gu who was praised by the masses. How could the Gu family even end up in such a state?

"Father, I was wronged." Gu Qing's face was pale and he spoke wretchedly, "Elder brother's death has nothing to do with me. It was Gu Ruoyun, she's making things up. Father, it is not like you do not know what sort of person that she is and what she is capable of."

The other people believed in Gu Ruoyun firstly because she had a personality of repaying any debts of kindness or vengeance. Secondly, it was because she was Gu Tian's daughter. However, Master Gu knew how deceitful and cunning she can be. She had tricked the Gu family once so it was not far out of reasoning that she may be trying to frame Qing'er.

"Father, Second Master, please go rescue Panpan, Panpan has been captured!"

At this moment, a fat, middle-aged woman cried and ran up to them, clutching Gu Qing by his sleeve. She screamed, "It's all

because of you, you b*stard! If not for you, the news about us being involved in Gu Tian's death would not have spread! Those who had good relations with Gu Tian have captured Panpan. If something were to happen to our daughter, I will never forgive you!"

Gu Qing, who had been relieved for a moment, was stunned when he heard Second Madam Gu's words. His face changed and his teeth chattered, he really wanted to slap her to death.

Chapter 210: Karma (6)

"Fool, you fool!"

He could hardly convince his father yet this foolish woman had come and exposed everything. This time, he was done for.

Actually, you could not blame Second Madam Gu since she had not followed Gu Qing to go look for Gu Ruoyun. After hearing what was being said outside, she was sure that they had enough proof to make those claims. Who would have thought that Gu Qing was not willing to admit to it?

"Father, father, do not listen to my foolish wife, I..."

Whack!

Master Gu gave him a fierce slap which knocked Gu Qing to the floor. However this did not quell his rage and he lifted his leg and stomped on him with a fierce expression on his face, it was as if he does not even recognize his own son.

"It was you who had killed Tian'er and you who ended up dooming our Gu family! If it weren't for you, I would not have been chased after by an angry mob! If it weren't for you, a small Hundred Herb Hall would not mean any harm to us! I want to kill you, you evil creature!"

Thinking of the prestige he had once garnered, the way those officers would smile at him as he walked past, Master Gu's heart trembled. How much of his youth had he wasted to walk out of that? Yet today he found out, the one who made him lose all that had been his own son, someone whom he had trusted.

It was too difficult to withstand.

"Father, father please help Panpan, she will die by their hands!"

Second Madam Gu's plump body rushed in front of the old man before she clutched onto his legs. She cried, "Father I beg you on

Panpan's behalf! She is your granddaughter, please hurry and save her, she's still a child."

"Scram!"

Master Gu raised his leg and kicked Second Madam Gu away. His veins were popping out from his forehead and his fists cracked, "Don't think that I'm ignorant that you had nothing to do with this! The both of you are cruel, even daring to harm your own brother! Right now, Gu Tian is gone and Gu Ruoyun does not want to acknowledge the Gu family anymore. If Gu Shengxiao finds out about all this, he will never forgive the Gu family. Our Gu family's geniuses are all gone, hahaha! All that's left are you pieces of worthless garbage!"

Regret...

Master Gu's heart was filled with regret.

If he had not abandoned Gu Ruoyun that year, even if Gu Tian had died by Gu Qing's hands, that would have had nothing to do with him! He would still be at the top of the Gu family and the Hundred Herb Hall along with the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger would belong to the Gu family...

But who would have thought that in these short three years, Gu Ruoyun would turn from a good-for-nothing to a kingly person?

Thinking of this, a tear of regret fell from the old man's eye...

"Lin'er, that's right, there is still Lin'er!"

Second Madam Gu seemed to have thought of something and her eyes brightened: "Lin'er is still the Young Master of the Gentle Breeze Faction. If the Gentle Breeze Faction were to back us, things will be different."

The Gentle Breeze Faction...

Gu Qing and Master Gu both thought of the powerful faction and looked at each other. The raging old man slowly began to calm

down.

"The Gentle Breeze Faction is our last hope, where is Lin'er now?"

Just as he asked this, a voice sounded from outside, "I am an elder from the Gentle Breeze Faction, I'm here to fetch the Young Master, is the Young Master in?"

"Someone from the Gentle Breeze Faction?"

Gu Qing was overjoyed, "This is great, the Gentle Breeze Faction is here, we're saved!"

Master Gu has had his military power stripped from him so the Gentle Breeze Faction was their final hope...

Chapter 211: Karma (7)

Master Gu walked out into the courtyard. He saw a gray-clothed elderly man standing in front of him and behind that old person was a group of young men and women wearing the same uniform. He could identify them just based on this.

"Gu Qing, please call Lin'er out."

Master Gu looked at Gu Qing and ordered him to do so.

Hearing this, Gu Qing came back to his sense and quickly walked to the backyard. After a while, a handsome young man followed behind Gu Qing. However, the young man's face did not look too well, it was full of frowns and worry.

"Young Master, I am here to fetch you back." Seeing the young man, the elderly man held his fists together in greeting and asked, "Other than that, the Master has also ordered me to take care of the pill formulas, you can pass them to me now."

Gu Xianglin's face looked really bad, he looked at Gu Qing and did not say anything.

"Lin'er?" Master Gu frowned, "Hurry up and hand over the pill formulas, it's safer with him."

He did not understand why Gu Xianglin's face looked that bad. When he had first obtained the pill formulas, was it not to gain the favor of the Gentle Breeze Faction?

"Grandfather, those two pill formulas..." Gu Xianglin finally spoke up, "Had been given away to another person by Father."

The elderly man's smile froze after hearing Gu Xianglin's words. In that moment, a burst of rage surged out from his heart. He had been unwilling to accept an outsider as the Gentle Breeze Faction's Young Master. However, to find out right now that the pill formulas had been given away, how could he not be angry!

"Gu Xianglin, do you really think you were our first choice to become the Young Master of the Gentle Breeze Faction? You have natural talent and the Master's son had passed away suddenly. If it weren't for those factors, you would not have gained this position. You had a precious item but did not save it for the Master and have even given it to someone else. How can you call yourself the Young Master of the Gentle Breeze Faction? It seems like you were trying to gain advantages from two sides!"

The old man barked and he swung his robe, saying: "The rest of you, follow me back. Gu Xianglin, you will stay here. I will report this to our Master and you will regret it later."

Saying this, he turned around and left.

Master Gu went berserk, he grabbed a stick and started hitting Gu Qing as if he wanted to beat him to death.

"You little mongrel, you killed your elder brother and now you've forced your son to give his pill formulas to someone else! If not for you, how could so many bad things have happened to us? And now there's a misunderstanding between the Gentle Breeze Faction and the Gu Family. I will beat you to death, you senseless mongrel!"

Even though Master Gu's Qi levels have not fully recovered, he was nonetheless still a Martial General. His beating caused Gu Qing to scream in pain as he ran about, trying to escape Master Gu's fury.

And his own son, Gu Xianglin, did not react as he observed all this.

This man had ruined his whole life!

How could he not hate him?

Ever since he was a young boy, he had always been outshone by Gu Shengxiao so he swore an oath that he would become better than him one day. He had tried really hard to gain the trust of the Gentle Breeze Faction's Master and had become his godson. He

even succeeded in becoming the Young Master of the Gentle Breeze Faction...

But right now? All his hard work was gone and he was deemed worthless once again!

"It is gone, it is all gone."

Gu Xianglin closed his pained eyes and his cheeks started to shudder, "All my years of hard work has been destroyed by you. Heh, if I had known that this would happen, I would not have obeyed you. This is sustaining two losses while trying to trick the enemy!"

Chapter 212: The Dongfang Family's Plea for Aid (1)

Gu Tian's death had caused an uproar in Azure Dragon Country but what happened next in the Gu family would send out even greater waves.

A few days ago, a group of people had rushed into the Gu household and kidnapped Gu Panpan. No one knows her whereabouts now and whether she was dead or alive, but she would definitely not end up in a good state. The fate of Second Master Gu, who had been responsible for the death of Gu Tian and his wife, was not any better and he was personally killed by Master Gu. He died a horrible death and no one sympathized with him, it was what he had deserved. However, the matter which shocked everyone the most was the fact that Master Gu had killed his own son.

This old man has really forsaken his entire family.

At this moment, in the Gu household, Second Madam Gu was curled up timidly in a fetal position as she at the white-haired Master Gu in horror.

Even though Gu Xiangling had hated Second Master Gu, he still had filial feelings for his mother so he stopped Master Gu before he could kill Second Madam Gu.

"Grandfather, what's done is done. We should discuss what to do next."

Gu Xiangling frowned as he spoke.

Hearing this, Master Gu tiredly closed his eyes.

He was tired, so tired. He felt as if he had aged ten years within these few days. All of his energy seemed to have evaporated...

"What do we do? What else could we do? Under Elder Yu's

support, the Tenth Prince has become the Emperor. All of our power is gone, we would probably not be allowed to live for long..."

He knew Gu Ruoyun's personality, that girl would definitely never forgive him!

As the grandson and grandfather were speaking, a laugh was heard from outside. A voice said, "I've been away for three years and so much has happened in Azure Dragon Country. General Gu, no, you're no longer a general. I wonder if you've carried out the mission that I had given you?"

Master Gu's body froze and he lifted his head. Under the bright sunlight from outside, a man dressed in brocaded robes walked in.

The man gave off a feeling as soothing and calm as jade! This man was like a beautiful piece of jade and his warmth made people feel comfortable. However, after seeing his face, Master Gu's face changed for the worse.

"Dongfang Shaoze!"

Dongfang Shaoze, who had tasked him to find Gu Ruoyun three years ago, has now returned!

Furthermore, it seems that he had not come for a friendly visit.

"I've heard all about it on my way here." The man waved his arm as he smiled warmly, "So, Gu Tian and his wife had been killed by someone from the Gu family?"

He looked at Second Madam Gu's pale face as he said this.

Second Madam Gu gritted her teeth and said, "That sl*t had seduced Gu Tian! Why would a hero like Gu Tian end up liking a vixen like her who was such a shameless woman!"

She was going to die anyway so why not vent all of her anger before that?

From her point of view, Liu Yu only had exceptionally good luck but did not have any other redeeming qualities! Gu Tian's taste

must have been really bad to end up liking such a woman.

Dongfang Shaoze's warm eyes dimmed and narrowed. His lips curved as he stared coldly at Second Madam Gu's plump body, "Even if she was not good enough, do you think that you would have been worthy to stand beside Gu Tian? Both you and Gu Qing had not only caused the deaths of Gu Tian and his wife but Yun'er had been almost dragged into that as well. I wanted to speak out for Yun'er but I had some troubles to settle and had to leave Azure Dragon Country for a while. Now, it turns out that Yun'er had not disappointed me. She has even discovered the real culprit behind her parents' deaths!"

Chapter 213: The Dongfang Family's Plea for Aid (2)

Master Gu was stunned. What had Dongfang Shaoze meant by that? He had tasked him with finding Gu Ruoyun's whereabouts all those years ago and even threatened his family with a bloodbath. Had all of this been to help Gu Ruoyun? No wonder they had been turned down every time they tried to get Gu Ruoyun back from the Hundred Herb Hall, it had been Dongfang Shaoze's doing!

"Why? Why have you done all this? Even if you had a relationship with Liu Yi, she has been dead for so long. Why are you still helping Gu Ruoyun?"

"Do you want to know the reason?"

Dongfang Shaoze stepped closer with a big smile on his handsome, jade-like face. His voice was calm and soothing as he said, "It's simple, that's because Liu Yi's surname is Dongfang!"

Bang!

The shock was so great that Master Gu's brain stopped working for a moment.

Liu Yi's surname was Dongfang, what...what does that mean?

"Her surname was Dongfang and she was part of the Dongfang family. She was the jewel of our house and my older sister!"

Dongfang Shaoze's smile diminished a little and he stared darkly at them as he spoke.

"Liu Yu's name was Dongfang Yu? She was from the Dongfang family? Impossible, this is not possible!"

Master Gu stumbled back in shock and he shook his head. His face was pale as he spoke, "Why had she never mentioned it before?"

He had not liked Dongfang Yu because he thought that she was of a lower status. Her background was unknown so he had not acknowledged her as his daughter-in-law. If it were not for Gu Tian's protection, he would not have allowed this woman, who did not bring any benefit to them, to enter the Gu family.

However, who would have known that Liu Yi, who had been snubbed by him, was from the Dongfang family?!

"Why would my sister say anything about that? She knows the personality traits of the Gu family very well. She would not have allowed you to drag the whole Dongfang family down. She would rather be looked down by you than to get her entire family involved!"

Dongfang Shaoze's heart hurt as he thought of his sister's death. He looked at the Gu family members with killing intent.

"You said that she did not have any merits?" He turned to look at Second Madam Gu, who was shuddering, then laughed, "She was the pearl of the Dongfang family. She had received the best education since she was young and her natural talent was as great as Gu Tian's. She kept a low profile as she did not want to steal his spotlight. Just the sight of her face could turn countries upside down, countless of people cherish her but she never yearned for attention. She never showed cowardice and she was brave! She was the greatest woman in the world and on this mainland, only Gu Tian could be a match for her! As for you, not only had you spied on Gu Tian, you have even tried to compare yourself to her. Do you have any qualities that can match up with her at all?"

Second Madam Gu bit her lips and stayed silent.

She had been envious of Dongfang Yu and was so jealous that she had become mad! She had then harmed her and Gu Tian but she would never have thought that woman whom she had looked down on was, in fact, the lady of the Dongfang family...

She was even naturally talented enough to be compared with Gu

Tian!

How could that vixen be this outstanding?

"Alright, all that you should know have been said to you. Now, it's time to pay your debt." Dongfang Shaoze smiled, "Gu Qing is dead and I have no way of clearing his debt so all of you will have to bear it instead! I will make the Gu family vanish from the face of the earth!"

Even though the Three Great Authorities forbids cultivators to lay a hand on ordinary people, there was no one else around other than those few people who were about to die here. Since there were no witnesses, how would anyone know that he had been the one to kill them?

He had waited for so many years. Now he could finally avenge his sister and brother-in-law...

Chapter 214: The Dongfang Family Calls For Aid (3)

Second Madam Gu broke out into a cold sweat as she looked at Dongfang Shaoze's gentle expression. A chill began to creep up from the bottom of her feet and climbed all the way to the crown of her head. An undisguised panic flashed across her pudgy face as she cried, "I don't want to die, please let me go! I really don't want to die!"

"If you had known about the consequences, why did you act in such a way in the past?"

Dongfang Shaoze sighed when he saw that Second Madam Gu had turned pale from fright. "You have only yourselves to blame for the consequences today. The Gu family was doomed when they made that mistake years ago!"

...

That day, the anguished wailing of Second Madam Gu could be heard all the way to the streets. No one knew what had happened. No one had even witnessed anyone entering the Gu household, but her cries painted a vivid image of flesh being slowly flayed off. After her screams, the entire estate went up in flames. The fierce fire burned for an entire day and night. When it finally subsided, the insufferably arrogant Gu family had been wiped out from the mainland...

In the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun was listening to Elder Yu's report on the recent events. Suddenly, a burst of gentle laughter was heard from outside the door. Then, the mild voice of a familiar-sounding man interrupted her thoughts.

"Yun'er, it has been three years since we last met. I did not expect for you to grow so fast and you've even managed to make people sit up and take notice of you."

Gu Ruoyun was dazed upon hearing the familiar voice which she has not heard in three years. Elder Yu made his way towards the visitor before she could even speak. He asked with a look of pleasant surprise, "Young Master, you've returned!"

Dongfang Shaoze nodded. When his eyes landed upon Gu Ruoyun's face, a soft smile appeared across his handsome face.

She did not know why but for some reason, every time she met Dongfang Shaoze, Gu Ruoyun would feel a sense of kinship towards him. That sense of intimacy did not come from the man's warm smile, but...it came from within her heart.

Furthermore, if it were not for Dongfang Shaoze, she would never have been able to become the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall and she would not have been able to grow her strength at such a rapid speed.

"You've come back?"

Gu Ruoyun asked, raising an eyebrow. There was a sense of good humor in her expression.

Dongfang Shaoze smiled back at her but he had a grave look in his eyes. After muttering to himself under his breath for a short while, he replied, "Yun'er, there's something that I... didn't want to tell you at first because I didn't want to pull you into this dispute. But now, I have no other choice but to tell you..."

"Young Master?" Elder Yu stiffened, "Has something happened to the Dongfang family?"

From Elder Yu's perspective, judging by how protective the Young Master is of her Ladyship, he would never reveal that issue to her unless it was a critical situation. Otherwise, it would only bring her Ladyship unnecessary trouble.

Hence, upon hearing the first half of Dongfang Shaoze's explanation, Elder Yu knew that something had happened to the Dongfang family, something that even the Young Master was not

able to solve.

Gu Ruoyun, on the other hand, did not think too much of it and simply smiled, "Young Master, if you have anything to say, speak freely. I'm listening."

Dongfang Shaoze's mind seemed to be lost somewhere far away as he looked at the girl's pretty face. "You really look like them, your face is so similar to your parents'. Actually, Yun'er, you really should call me uncle! Your mother, Liu Yu's real name was actually Dongfang Yu. She was the Lady of the Dongfang family and my older sister whom I've admired ever since I was a boy."

Just how much of a genius was Dongfang Yu? Even when compared to Gu Tian, she would never have lost to him. However, as the Lady of the Dongfang family, she had been hidden away ever since she was a child. Besides the powerful organizations that were on the same level as the Dongfang Family, how could anyone have known of how glorious she had been?

Chapter 215: The Dongfang Family's Plea for Aid (4)

Actually, Gu Ruoyun had somewhat expected that Dongfang Shaoze and her parents' relationship had not been as simple as mere friendship. Nevertheless, she had never imagined that her own mother was from the Dongfang family!

Astonishment flashed through her bright eyes fleetingly.

"My Mother was the daughter of the Dongfang family? Why had I never heard of that before? Also, if she was from the Dongfang family, why had they not protected her?"

Gu Ruoyun was extremely calm at this moment. She was so calm that Dongfang Shaoze could not help but feel a flash of guilt in his heart.

"Yun'er, my apologies. I had not been able to protect your mother. That year, when I got to know of your mother's death, I had rushed over and wanted to investigate the truth behind her death. However, while I was on the way, I was intercepted and brought back by my father who was also your grandfather. You should know about the existence of the Three Great Authorities. My father had done that... because he was afraid that the Dongfang family would be destroyed. However, I do not disregard what he had done."

How could one, as a father, not be heartbroken over his daughter's death? Even though his father had admired Gu Tian, in the end, he had still been unwilling to let the two of them be together; he was unwilling to let this issue compromise the position of the Dongfang family...

Gu Ruoyun smiled a smile that caused Dongfang Shaoze's heart to ache.

"The Dongfang family... Haha, he was afraid of the Three Great

Authorities so he had let his own innocent daughter die in vain. Furthermore, after all these years, there had never been anyone from the Dongfang family who had come to look for me. Even though I had been beaten to death by the Gu family, no one has ever stood up for me. If it wasn't for my good luck, perhaps... I would already be dead."

To be honest, she was not fond of the Dongfang family at all. After all, she believed that the Dongfang family could not have been ignorant of how she had been living all these years. Yet they had never sent anyone to stand up for her, ever!

If someone had come, even if it was just to retort a single sentence for her sake, the Gu family would not have dared to treat her so cruelly.

"Yun'er."

Dongfang Shaoze's heart ached and he raised his hands to pull Gu Ruoyun into his embrace. Hugging the frail young girl in his arms tightly, he lowered his head and said: "I'm so sorry, Yun'er. Your Uncle has come too late and has caused you to endure so much pain..."

The warm embrace melted Gu Ruoyun's heart. No matter how the Dongfang family had neglected her, the man before her eyes was blameless in all the help he had rendered to her.

She would forever remember this debt of gratitude.

"I have no fondness for the Dongfang family. Only you will always be my Uncle! Always and never changing."

The young girl lifted her head and her beautiful face was full of determination.

At that moment, a surge of warmth filled Dongfang Shaoze's heart. He lifted his hand to caress Gu Ruoyun's head as his eyes filled with a smile that one could drown in.

"Yun'er, perhaps your grandfather had his concerns and was

unable to do what he wanted to do, but he really loved your mother. Also, remember that no matter what happens in the future, even if the Dongfang family cannot stand by your side, your Uncle will always be there for you."

Gu Ruoyun shrugged and blinked as she asked, "That's right, Uncle, you had come to visit me not only because of that, correct? Has something happened to the Dongfang family?"

Dongfang Shaoze's heart sank. As he recalled the recent incident, he could not help but let out a deep sigh.

Chapter 216: The Dongfang Family's Plea For Aid (5)

"Actually, it's not a big issue. I feel your grandfather's physical well-being is not what it used to be. His life may be coming to an end. In addition to that, it has become a reality that the Dongfang family is currently surrounded by enemies. Not only does he have to face enemies from the outside, also... He has to take precautions against the disputes within the family. He is gradually unable to cope and if he does not make a breakthrough soon, he could, at most, only withstand this for another one to two years."

Dongfang Shaoze laughed bitterly. Back then, he had painstakingly convinced his father to do this so that the Weapon Refining Sect would not have the time to deal with Gu Ruoyun. However, in the end, it was the Dongfang Family that bore the brunt of it.

In the period of a full three years, the Dongfang family had struggled with the Weapon Refining Sect. If anything were to happen to Father, the Dongfang family could be destroyed very quickly. But he did not tell Gu Ruoyun about this point. No matter what, he was unwilling to use this debt of gratitude to hold her back...

Gu Ruoyun quietened down. After a long while, she lifted her head to look at the man's warm face, saying, "I don't like the Dongfang family because of their attitude towards Mother's death. However, I acknowledge you as my uncle and you are part of the Dongfang family. Therefore... I will not let anything happen to the Dongfang family!"

What she really means was that she would help the Dongfang family, not for the sake of so-called blood relations and family love, but for him, Dongfang Shaoze's sake.

Dongfang Shaoze's heart swelled with warmth but it was also

followed by guilt that could not be shaken off. He did not know how much trouble and pain this girl had gone through for her character to have transformed and become so steadfast. If he had retreated and come out from Azure Dragon Country earlier, perhaps she would not have had to endure so much pain...

All these years, none of the Dongfang family had helped her. It was understandable that she would not have any affection towards the Dongfang family. If it was not for her good fortune, who knew how many times she would have died at the hands of the Gu family.

"Uncle, with my current level of ability, I'm unable to help the Master of the Dongfang family with his breakthrough. Let us put the issue of him breaking through aside for another day. Here's a Longevity Pill, give that to him and it will prolong his life by ten years. Now, I'll need to make a trip elsewhere. Once I am done with that, I will then go to the Dongfang family and look for you."

Gu Ruoyun could roughly guess the pressing issues that the Dongfang family was facing now. Elder Yu had informed her that the Weapon Refining Sect had not come to trouble her because of the Dongfang family's interference. She did not even have to think very far to know that this was something that Dongfang Shaoze had done for her sake...

Although he did not use this leverage to force her into helping the Dongfang family, Gu Ruoyun was not an ungrateful person. So, even if she felt no fondness towards the Dongfang family, she would still do her utmost best to help him...

However, after hearing her words, Dongfang Shaoze was stunned.

Truth be told, he had come to ask for a Longevity Pill. With this pill, Father could add another ten years to his lifespan. With those ten years, perhaps he could achieve a breakthrough. Even in the worst-case scenario, if Father was unable to have a breakthrough,

it would still gain another ten years for the Dongfang family.

But, just now Yun'er had said that at this moment, she was unable to help Father with his breakthrough? Does that mean that she can help him in the future?

As his thoughts wandered to this point, Dongfang Shaoze shook his head. He smiled lightly and said, "Yun'er, in that case, I'll wait for you at the Dongfang family home. But may Uncle ask you, where are you going a while later?"

Gu Ruoyun lowered her eyes slightly as the corners of her lips curved up into a smile.

That smile was full of warmth, expectation, and a sliver of urgency...

Chapter 217: The Dongfang Family's Plea for Aid (6)

Wei Yiyi, who was standing by the side, was stunned; she had followed her master for three years but she had never seen her reveal such a smile. This smile was beautiful enough to shake the human heart.

"I'm going to Heaven City to meet the Xia family." The young girl's face was shrouded in a faint glow as her bright eyes flashed with longing and guilt.

Yu'er, it has been three years, I can finally go and look for you now. You must wait for me. This lifetime, I will not let you suffer the same kind of pain as you did in the previous life.

"Heaven City?" Dongfang Shaoze furrowed his brows, "The power of the Heaven City and the Dongfang family's are not too much different from one another. Yun'er, I don't know how you are connected to the Xia family but if someone is troubling you, you can let me know through Elder Yu. No matter what, the Xia family must not disrespect the Dongfang family."

"I understand."

Gu Ruoyun nodded her head lightly. The most urgent thing now was that she must find a way to get the Heaven City token. Before anything else, she would need to make a trip to Black Tortoise Country...

...

After Dongfang Shaoze had said his farewells and left, Gu Ruoyun returned to the inner courtyard. Just as she walked in, she was pulled into an embrace by a pair of hands. The man's silver hair fell forward as his red robes fluttered in the wind like a bewitching ghost. His arms cradled the young girl before him tightly as if he was afraid that she might suddenly vanish.

Gu Ruoyun did not resist and allowed the man to draw her into his embrace. After a long while, his quiet voice sounded in her ear, "Are you leaving?"

"Yes."

Gu Ruoyun nodded her head as she replied in a quiet voice.

"Can I not come along with you?" The man's voice was laced with resentment and a deep sadness.

"Xiao Ye, this time I'll be searching for someone who is very important to me. I will be back very soon. Wait for me here, alright?"

Someone very important?

The man's arms gradually loosened and his expression was full of resentment as he looked at Gu Ruoyun. He looked at Gu Ruoyun as though she was someone who was abandoning her family. His breathtakingly gorgeous face was full of grief. For some unknown reason, when he heard that she was going to search for someone very important to her, his heart had started to ache. That heartache... It was as though he had experienced it before...

"Xiao Ye," Gu Ruoyun smiled gently and said, "I'm also not too sure about the matter this time, and even more so I do not know if he is the person that I'm looking for. But in any case, I need to make a trip there. In my heart, Zixie, you, and my brother Yu'er, are all very important to me. If anyone of you ever got lost, I would go to the ends of the earth to get you back. I'm not letting you come with me this time because the token to enter Heaven City is much more difficult to obtain. Other than the great families in Heaven City, any outsider would only be able to enter at the price of a token per person. If it is only one token, I can still think of a way to get it but to obtain two, I'm afraid, is going to be a bit more difficult."

Qianbei Ye, who had been full of resentment at first, after

hearing Gu Ruoyun's explanation, his divinely beautiful face lit up with a smile. Did Xiao Yun mean that he was also very important to her?

"Alright, Xiao Yun, I will wait for you. No matter if it's ten years, twenty years or a hundred years, I will wait for you here."

Even if a lifetime was exhausted, he would still be waiting for her here...

"Master, when will you be leaving?"

Wei Yiyi rubbed her nose. It figures that Qianbei Ye, who could make his enemies tremble, would only reveal this innocent appearance before Gu Ruoyun.

"I'll be leaving immediately."

Gu Ruoyun pondered for a moment, raised her head and said, "Wei Yiyi, after I have gone, bring Uncle Luo and Luo Yin to the Devil Sect's headquarters and arrange a position for them."

Saying thus, she lifted her head to look up at the skies and in the dimness, she seemed to see a young boy's shy smile...

"Yu'er, wait for your big sister. I'll be able to find you very soon and after that, the two of us, sister and brother, will never be separated again."

Chapter 218: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(1)

At the Imperial City in Black Tortoise Country.

Gu Ruoyun was walking on the bustling streets with both hands behind her head before she squinted slightly at the racket going on in the avenue before her. A deep, pondering feeling passed over her heart.

"Now that I've arrived in Black Tortoise Country, I'm not sure how I can get into Heaven City. I'll pass that bridge and when I reach it, there will be a way."

As she was thinking, she suddenly noticed a fat man running towards her. His head was turned to look behind him as he was running and so did not see Gu Ruoyun who was right in front of him. If Gu Ruoyun had noticed that fatty earlier on, perhaps she might have been able to dodge him but by the time she had come to her senses, the fatty had already reached her...

As she saw that the fatty was about to collide into her, Gu Ruoyun hurriedly gathered energy into her body. Hence, when the fatty drew nearer to Gu Ruoyun, there was a loud crash. A body weighing around 250 kilograms flew across the sky in an arc before falling nastily towards the ground...

Boom!

After the heavy object had landed, it suddenly started to make noise, "Who? Which motherf*cker dares to plot against me, the Prince! Motherf*cker, do you wish to die? Ouch! I think my waist is broken."

However, very quickly, the fatty and self-proclaimed prince immediately shut his mouth.

A bunch of youths, clad in luxurious silk clothing, had appeared from behind him and ran over to surround him as they panted

heavily. One by one, they started to speak ferociously.

"Pang Ran, if you can, then continue running! You are capable of nothing and that includes escaping!"

"Motherf*cker, seriously, I'm chasing you to my death. Now let's see where you will run to!"

"Damn fatty, I really do not know what you eat. I feel so sick of seeing the lumps of meat on your greasy body!"

Pang Ran laughed and the fat on his chubby face wobbled along with his grin.

"Dear brothers and sisters, please be more lenient towards me, is that okay? I've already been bashed up by you people so much that I have lost so many kilos so just let me go."

"Let you go? Hoho, my mood today is really bad. It was difficult but we've finally got you and now I can vent it out on you. I would be a motherf*cking idiot to let you go. All of you, bash him, bash him hard. As long as he is not bashed to death!"

The youth, who appeared to be the leader, laughed coldly before lifting his leg and stamping it down viciously, shocking Pang Ran so much that he panicked and used his hands to cover his eyes as his entire body trembled involuntarily.

However, the expected pain never arrived. Pang Ran slowly opened the slits between his fingers and carefully peered out. He saw that the leg which was supposed to stomp on him being held by a slender arm.

He moved his sight upwards and for a moment, an indifferent, pretty face appeared before him.

The young girl was holding the youth's leg tightly. Her expression was calm and unperturbed, as though she was not bothered by the youth's fury and hatred.

At this moment, Pang Ran's agitated face was filled with tears

which streamed down his cheeks. He thought that he was going to be beaten up again and had not expected to be rescued by anyone. She was a goddess who had been sent from heaven to save him.

"Damn girl, you want to be a busybody?"

The youth's expression was gloomy and ghastly as he looked at Gu Ruoyun coldly.

"I'm sorry, I had accidentally bumped into him just now so I should save him once."

Normally, Gu Ruoyun would not have cared about these matters.

But just now, if she had not knocked into the fatty and caused him to fly, he would not have been captured by these people. In a way, Gu Ruoyun owed him this.

"Hmph!"

The youth harrumphed coldly, "You're asking for it!"

Chapter 219: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(2)

Whoosh!

Saying thus, the youth raised his hand and clawed towards Gu Ruoyun with a flash of viciousness in his eyes. What happened next was a scene which shocked everyone.

As the youth's hand was drawing close to Gu Ruoyun's face, the young girl, who was still holding onto his leg, lifted it up and savagely flung him away. On top of that, after she had flung the youth away with one hand, she picked up all 250 kilograms of Pang Ran's big body and threw him towards the youth.

Thud!

How could the skinny, weak body of the youth withstand the weight of Pang Ran's body? He was immediately crushed and spurted out fresh blood. His head tilted before he fainted.

Everyone on the scene was stunned! How could that skinny girl lift not only the youth but the hefty weight of Pang Ran as well? This seemingly skinny young girl had actually used one hand to pick him up?!

This fellow, was she the reincarnation of the God of Strength? That petite body could actually explode with such great strength.

"You are fine, right?"

Gu Ruoyun dusted her hands and walked to Pang Ran's side. She stretched a hand towards him and said while smiling gently, "I'm very sorry about just now. I was thinking about a problem so I had not seen you come near and accidentally collided into you. I'm sorry for what I've done."

No matter what the case was, Gu Ruoyun was not an unreasonable person. Although this had happened because the

fatty had not watched where he was going, she was also in the wrong so it was appropriate for her to apologize.

"This..." Pang Ran scratched his head, saying, "If you want to apologize, you can treat me to a meal. If you treat me to a meal, I will forgive you then."

"Alright, what do you want to eat?"

"Meat!" Pang Ran raised his head. His eyes were shining and emphasizing every word that he spoke, "I want to eat meat!"

...

Inside the restaurant, the entire table was a mess.

Gu Ruoyun looked at Pang Ran who was sweeping up the food on the table like a wind sweeping away the clouds. For a moment, three lines appeared on her face in disbelief as she thought, This fellow, how long has it been since he had last eaten? His hunger was unexpectedly extreme.

"Oh, it smells so good, I've not eaten meat in a long time and that kind of life is not fit for a human being."

Pang Ran's was holding a pork trotter in one hand while the other hand held a chicken drumstick. At the same time, his mouth was full of red braised pork. His expression was so full of joy and satisfaction, it was as though he had never eaten meat in his life.

Gu Ruoyun scrunched up her forehead as she rubbed her head and said, "My good sir, you're Black Tortoise Country's Prince. How could you have not eaten meat?"

"Gulp!"

Pang Ran swallowed the food in his mouth before saying, "Goddess, you should be able to see that I, Pang Ran, am a complete good-for-nothing through and through!"

Gu Ruoyun could see that this fatty was a good-for-nothing but she had never imagined that anyone would proudly call themselves

that.

"And then?"

Gu Ruoyun raised her eyebrow as she asked.

"And then what?" Pang Ran rolled his eyes before continuing, "And then I'm looked down by everyone. But my Imperial Mother is Imperial Father's most beloved lady and I'm the Imperial Mother's only son. Since I'm a good-for-nothing, it is impossible for me to take the throne so Imperial Father is very ashamed of me. He then gave me a lot of money to spend. I don't have to cultivate, I don't like women, I don't like to gamble. So, I had spent all my money on food and, in the end, I became this damn sight."

Pang Ran blinked his eyes and while saying all that, his expression relaxed as though he was talking about a third party and not about himself.

"After I had become like this, the Imperial Father felt regretful so he stopped giving me an allowance and banned me from eating meat! He then forced me to lose weight! The royal family has always been very complicated and because of Imperial Father's love for Imperial Mother, a lot of people don't like me. So, every time that Imperial Father was not looking, they will send people to beat me up. Don't even get me started, it was really effective. After I had been beaten up a few times, I lost 35 kilograms. Do you know how much 35 kilograms is? So, even when the Imperial Father had found out about the beatings, he simply kept one eye shut so that I would lose weight as long as I'm not beaten to death!"

Chapter 220: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(3)

During his explanation, another pork knuckle went into Pang Ran's stomach. He wiped the grease from around his mouth and finally gave a satisfied burp, saying, "I'm full now. I've not enjoyed a meal so much in a long time! Actually, I don't mind getting bashed up but what hurts me the most is how Imperial Father forces me to eat vegetables every day! What's so nice about those green things? They disgust me to death."

Three black lines appeared momentarily on Gu Ruoyun's forehead; she was totally speechless when it comes to this loser prince. Of course, what made her even more speechless was that weirdo Imperial father of his.

Crash!

Right at this moment, the door to their private room in the restaurant was kicked open and an arrogant voice blared.

"Pang Ran, get out here!"

"Oh, mother!"

Pang Ran was so shocked that he threw away the bone in his hand and hid under the table in a flash. However, his huge and fat body could not fit under the table and flipped over the entire table instead.

As for the bone he had thrown out involuntarily, by a stroke of luck or the lack of, it had been flung towards the youth in the silk clothing standing by the door. The bone fell on the youth's face with a 'ping' before slowly sliding down towards the floor.

As he sniffed the greasy and meaty smell on his face, the silk-clothed youth could feel his stomach churning like the raging ocean and he desperately wanted to vomit everything he had eaten in the past few days. His face turned a sickly green color as he

gritted his teeth and said, "Pang Ran, you good-for-nothing! Today I will teach you how to respect your elders! Lin Luo is one of my men and you had dared to knock him out. This is the consequence that you must bear!"

Gu Ruoyun shot an expressionless glance at him and, using a pair of chopsticks, picked up a small piece of bone. As he was speaking, she flicked it towards the silk-clothed youth's mouth quickly.

The silk-clothed youth had not shut his mouth in time; the piece of bone flew into his mouth and instantly, a feeling of nausea surged up from his guts. He could not stand it anymore and ran to the side as he vomited.

It must be known that the piece of bone had just been chewed on by that damn fatty Pang Ran. This was absolutely disgusting and it was even more disgusting than actually kissing him!

"You talk too much."

Gu Ruoyun glanced at him expressionlessly and spoke emotionlessly.

"You... You just wait, you stinky girl! You've helped this damn fatty and you must bear the consequences!"

The silk-clothed youth's face had turned even more ashen. He glared at the two of them viciously before turning and running out of the restaurant.

He could not stand it anymore, he had to go and throw up somewhere else...

Inside that restaurant's private room, Pang Ran crawled up from the ground with his face full of admiration for Ruoyun, "Goddess, you are too awesome! Especially that sentence, it was so cool!"

"Can you change the way you address me?" The corners of Gu Ruoyun's lips twitched as she said helplessly.

"No!"

As for this issue, Pang Ran very resolutely shook his head, "You are a goddess sent from heaven to rescue me. I have confirmed it so from this day onwards, I, Pang Ran will follow you! What more about being the Sixth Prince, I don't give a damn, I'm not even allowed to eat meat. Only by following you, goddess, will I get to eat meat!"

He had long ago wished not to be the Sixth Prince; not only was there no meat for him to eat but he had to suffer endless beatings. For all that he cared, anyone who wished to be the Sixth Prince could go and take his place.

As she looked at Pang Ran's face which was filled with longing, Gu Ruoyun's eyes flashed several times and she asked, "Fatty, do you wish to lose weight?"

"If I can eat meat, I'm willing to lose weight. Meat is my life and if I do not have a life, then what's the point of losing weight?"

Pang Ran pouted his lips as he replied.

"I can help you lose weight, it all depends on whether you are willing."

Gu Ruoyun smiled gently at Pang Ran. This time, she has her own reasons for doing this. Since it was the people of Heaven City who decided who sat on the throne for Black Tortoise Country, if Pang Ran became extremely excellent, it would definitely attract the attention of Heaven City. Who knows, she might have a way to communicate with the people of Heaven City and subsequently obtain a token to enter Heaven City...

Chapter 221: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(4)

"Will I be allowed to eat meat?"

Pang Ran blinked his eyes as he asked in a pitiful manner.

"Yes, you can." The corners of Gu Ruoyun's mouth curved upwards slightly, "You can eat meat but you can't indulge in it too much! If you follow my plan, I can make you thin in three months."

For a moment, Pang Ran's eyes, which had been squished in so much that they were barely visible, flashed with a certain brightness. He was so excited that his entire fat face flushed red, "Really? I don't have to eat only vegetables and suffer beatings to lose weight anymore? Goddess, you are truly my goddess. I love you to death."

Thud!

Pang Ran threw himself at Gu Ruoyun with open arms, intending to hug her fiercely.

However...

As she saw the gigantic man pouncing towards her, Gu Ruoyun immediately stepped away without a second thought. The fat body then fell in a straight line right out of the private room and coincidentally collided into a passerby. The man was immediately crushed. White froth bubbled from his mouth as both his eyes rolled back before he fainted.

The passerby was really unfortunate; he had only come in for a meal but had been, for no reason, crushed by a big mountain. Specifically, that huge mountain's backside was sitting right on his face. It was so disgusting that he almost threw up his dinner from last night.

"I'm so sorry, this was not intentional."

Pan Ran stood up leisurely and apologized profusely to the unconscious person. However, the expression on his fat face immediately changed when he saw the person's face. He ran quickly into the private room, pulled Gu Ruoyun up on her two feet and ushered her outside.

"Goddess, we must leave quickly, a disaster has happened!"

Despite his huge body, this fatty could run like the wind. In the blink of an eye, they had both rushed out of the restaurant. He had been running so often that he had trained himself quite well.

"What happened?"

Gu Ruoyun looked at Pang Ran who was beside her and asked with a stunned expression.

Without a doubt, she had never seen the fatty show such a horrified expression before even when he was faced with the youth who was looking for trouble just now or when he had faced the fellow who had claimed to be the Imperial Older Brother. Was that person someone very influential?

After running for god knows how long, the fatty finally stopped. He gasped and panted for a while before wiping the sweat from his face. He said agitatedly, "Goddess, we're in deep trouble now! We are finished! If Imperial Father finds out about this, I'll be beaten to death!"

Pang Ran's mouth chattered nonstop as cold sweat appeared densely on his forehead.

"What on earth just happened?" Gu Ruoyun's face darkened and she asked gravely.

"The guy that I had knocked down and sat on just now is the great Imperial Adviser of Black Tortoise Country. It's said that he knows everything from astronomy and skies above to the geography on earth. He can even see and predict the past and the

future! Imperial Father trusts him very much! This Imperial Adviser is really very magical; before I was born, he could already foretell that I would be born a good-for-nothing and I really turned out to be a good-for-nothing!"

Pang Ran was immersed in his own world as he spoke did not notice Gu Ruoyun's darkening expression.

"The Imperial Adviser?" The corner of her lips curled up into a cold sneer. There was an indistinguishable expression in her clear eyes, "A very fine, fortune-telling Imperial Adviser indeed! Fatty, if I had been there before your mum gave birth to you, I would also have known that you would be a good-for-nothing in the future."

"Goddess, are you also that magical?"

Hearing her words, both of Pang Ran's eyes momentarily shone as he stared at the young girl's beautiful face.

Magical?

Gu Ruoyun sneered. There were indeed people who have the ability to see and predict the past and future in this world but the Imperial Adviser was definitely not one of them.

When she saw Pang Ran, she could tell that this fatty had been poisoned while he was still in his mother's womb. His tendons and arteries had all been blocked by toxins but it was clear that the poisoner had not wanted to take his life and only wanted to make him unable to cultivate. So, in other words, this fatty had not been born as a good-for-nothing; he had been sabotaged even before he was born.

So, what was the Imperial Adviser saying about what he had foreseen?

"Let's go, fatty," Gu Ruoyun patted the fatty's shoulders as she said, "Let's go first to your place. In time, I will help you lose weight."

Chapter 222: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(5)

In Black Tortoise Country, when the princes reach adulthood, they would have to come out and establish themselves.

At that moment, within the Sixth Prince's estate, Gu Ruoyun got someone to heat up some water then threw some medicinal herbs into the bathtub. She then instructed the fatty, "After a while, take a bath in this. You must stay in the tub for three hours before you can come out. Let me tell you this, these medicinal herbs are volatile in nature but they can draw out some of the toxins from your body. I need to first detoxify you before we can break the fat! If you can't stand it, just think about your tribulations all these years and the meat that you love to eat. Then you should be able to endure it..."

Having said that, she immediately walked out, not giving the Sixth Prince a chance to ask any questions.

As she closed the room's door, a wailing sound like a pig being slaughtered echoed from the room.

Outside the room, a huddled group of maidservants was whispering amongst themselves as they glanced at the tightly shut door with confusion in their eyes.

It was obvious that they do not know what His Royal Majesty was up to...

For three hours, the wailing grew louder and louder, causing the hearts of everyone in the Sixth Prince's estate to be filled with panic. It was only after three hours that the noise finally stopped and the silence was restored to the Sixth Prince's estate...

However, when the maidservants went in to clean the bathtub, they almost fainted from the smell. The water, which was originally green in color, was now turbid and emitted a foul

stench. No one, not even Gu Ruoyun, could have guessed that there were so many toxins accumulated inside Pang Ran's body...

"Goddess, what kind of medicated bath was that? It almost killed me!"

Just as Pang Ran ran out into the courtyard, he saw Gu Ruoyun who had been admiring the flowers and the trees. He hurriedly ran over to her as he lamented.

If it was not for the fact that his body now feels more refreshed than ever, he might have suspected that his goddess had fooled him on purpose.

"Fatty, try to cultivate."

The corners of Gu Ruoyun's lips curved up slightly as she spoke softly.

"Goddess, what are you saying? I, Pang Ran, am a huge good-for-nothing. I have nothing to do with such a thing as cultivation." Pang Ran laughed heartily as he spoke. He had tried to cultivate before but ultimately, the spiritual force flowing in his veins had all been blocked and there was no way for him to breakthrough. He had then given up.

Hearing that, Gu Ruoyun smiled gently, "Just try it out first."

"Alright. Since you don't believe me, goddess, I will try and prove you wrong."

Saying thus, Pang Ran sat his butt on the ground and began to absorb the spiritual energy in his surroundings. At first, he was ready to fail one more time but, as the spiritual energy moving in his body reached the points which had been blocked before, the energy... Surprisingly passed through?

Pang Ran blinked his eyes as he thought, what... What was going on? Wasn't he a good-for-nothing? This had been foretold by the Imperial Adviser. The Imperial Adviser had even said that he would be useless and he would achieve nothing in the end. But

now, what was this?

It was obvious that Gu Ruoyun could see the doubt in Pang Ran's heart. She said softly, "You weren't born a good-for-nothing. The reason why you could not cultivate before was because you had been poisoned while you were in your mother's womb. This caused your veins to be blocked by toxins so you could not absorb any spiritual energy! I have removed the toxins from your body and now, you can be a normal person."

Pang Ran's brain could not comprehend the weight of it all immediately. After a few moments of processing, he finally understood all that Gu Ruoyun had said. He then became furious!

Chapter 223: The Good-For-Nothing Prince (6)

"F*ckers, who could be so sinister and cruel to go so far as to poison me! If it wasn't for that b*stard, I would not have been a good-for-nothing. If I wasn't a good-for-nothing, I would not have given up on myself! In the end, I've made myself into this damned thing! If I ever find out who that b*stard is, I will f*ck his ancestors up!"

Pang Ran was mad with fury. He gritted his teeth and looked as if he wanted to swallow the other person alive. Only God knows how he had passed his days under inhumane conditions for all these years! As for the main culprit of this huge tragedy, he would definitely not let him go unpunished!

"Right, what do you think about the prophecy by the Imperial Adviser regarding my situation?" In the blink of an eye, Pang Ran suddenly recalled this matter.

"Who is the Imperial Advisor close to?"

"That would be Imperial Concubine Lin. The Imperial Adviser is Imperial Concubine Lin's older brother by birth. My eldest Imperial brother, second Imperial brother and fourth Imperial brother had all passed on early. The third Imperial brother is Imperial Concubine Lin's son and the most probable heir to the throne. The one who went to the restaurant today looking for trouble was my fifth Imperial brother."

Afraid that Gu Ruoyun would not understand the nature of their relationships, Pang Ran quickly explained everything.

Gu Ruoyun rubbed her chin in thought as she listened to Pang Ran's words, "This Imperial Adviser is not an easy target. He's most likely involved in this matter as well based on the fact that he is related to Imperial Concubine Lin and the Third Prince is his

nephew."

"Damn!" The fatty was furious, "The Imperial Adviser has actually wanted to harm me? To think that I had always admired him so much! This is such a waste of my affection!"

The Imperial Adviser had foretold that Pang Ran would be a good-for-nothing and this damned fatty had even adored him like an idol! It was unimaginable to think that not only was the Emperor of Black Tortoise Country a weirdo, this fatty was the king amongst the weirdos...

She had never met such a weird person!

"Fatty, come with me." Gu Ruoyun raised her eyebrows, "If you stay here, someone will be sure to come and disturb us. We need a quiet place to help you lose weight. After three months, I will certainly get the fat off your entire body."

...

The weight loss technique that Gu Ruoyun mentioned was to, again, use a bunch of obscure medicinal herbs for the fatty to bathe in. Every day, Gu Ruoyun could hear the fatty wailing like a pig being slaughtered. However, the results were very clear. After each bath, there would be layers of yellow fat floating inside the bathtub. They had all been discharged from his pores.

Still, it was a great pity that the fatty's natural talent was not all that great. Furthermore, he was such a lazy fellow that he had only broken through to level two in the Qi Collection ranks in three months. This was only achieved after Gu Ruoyun had fed him a pile of pills.

Therefore, Gu Ruoyun gave up on the plan of helping him to cultivate.

However, in contrast to cultivation, this fatty has the talent to govern the country; this sort of skill was much more suitable for him to be the Emperor of the nation! As the Emperor, one does not

need to be a skilled cultivator but one would need to have the ability to govern the people peacefully. Furthermore, Black Tortoise Country was controlled by the Xia family of Heaven City. As long as the Xia family grants their permission, one could sit securely on the throne and no one would dare to try and usurp it. The Xia family would only choose a new Emperor if the current one makes a huge mistake.

As for this fatty, he had never shown one ounce of talent because the Imperial Adviser had commented that he would be a good-for-nothing for life so he had given up on himself.

...

In the Royal Study, a figure dressed in brilliant yellow sat on the Dragon Chair as he studied the Imperial edicts on the table closely. That person occasionally furrowed his eyebrows and sighed. There were worry lines written all over his face.

Chapter 224: The Good-For-Nothing Prince

(7)

"It has been three months; that damned fatty has been missing for a whole three months. Could it be that We have been too severe with him so he had run away from home? Or had he accidentally got into some misfortune because he was too afraid and has now hidden himself away?" Pang Zihuang sighed softly as he rubbed the space between his brows where a headache was brewing, "Doesn't he know that all We've done had been for his own good? Why can he not understand Our pain?"

Pang Zihuang lifted his head slightly as he spoke and right at that moment, he noticed a suspicious-looking figure coming towards him. He immediately burst out angrily.

"Who are you? How dare you come into the Royal Study? Are you here to assassinate Us? Where are the guards? Are they dead? How dare they let a stranger come in!"

In his rage, Pang Zihuang immediately stepped out from behind the study desk and grabbed the suspicious-looking youth, landing a slap straight on the youth's face.

"You sure have guts! You're only level two in the Qi Collection ranks but you would dare to come and assassinate Us! Can it be that you look down on Our abilities? You've arrived just in time, We have been feeling depressed recently and had nowhere to vent. Now, We can use you to take it out on!"

Pang Zihuang usually does not like to have people around when he was checking and reading the Imperial edicts, the entire Royal Study was empty except for him. He could speak whoever he wanted without keeping his image as the Emperor.

Three months ago, Pang Ran had knocked the Imperial Adviser unconscious and had then gone missing. Since then, the Imperial

Adviser has been coming every day to see him. However, this Imperial Adviser was exceptionally skillful so he dared not offend him. He has been suppressing his anger and now something good has happened. Someone has, in disregard of his own life, offered himself up to him. How could he let go of this punching bag?

Just as Pang Zihuang was immersing himself in the joy of handing out the beating, the youth in his hands let out an anguished wail.

"Aiyo, Imperial Father, please don't hurt me! I'm your son."

"Motherf*cker, you, an insignificant assassin, dare impersonate Our son? How would We not know that we have such a son as you!"

Pang Zihuang became even more enraged. This assassin was so bold that even after he had been caught, he still unashamedly claimed to be his son. To impersonate royalty was a crime punishable by death.

However, after hearing those words, the youth cried out even more pitifully.

"Imperial Father, I'm really your son. It's me, Pang Ran!"

"Pang Ran?"

Pang Zihuang was stunned. It was only then that he observed the youth carefully.

Although this youth's physique could not be said to be slender, he had a well-proportioned figure. His facial features were not exceptional but they were not common either. His skin was exceptionally fair, with a pair of sad eyes which were looking back at Pang Zihuang.

It had to be said that the youth before his eyes definitely looks somewhat like Pang Ran, the voice was also exactly the same...

"You're Pang Ran?" Pang Zihuang cast a doubtful glance at him.

He wanted to acknowledge his son but this... This was too f*cking unbelievable to be true!

In three months time, that damned fatty, who had weighed 250 kilograms, had undergone a huge change! It would be hard for anyone to rashly claim that they could recognize him now...

"Imperial Father, have you forgotten that when I was five years old, I had peeked at the palace maids when they were having their bath? At seven years old, I still needed a nanny to feed me and I was still wetting my bed at twelve years old? I really am your son, Pang Ran."

When he heard this, Pang Zihuang, who could not believe it at first, was immediately convinced that the person in front of him was his son.

No one else would know about these events other than for him, the Empress, and Pang Ran!

Even the blanket from the bedwetting incident had been personally burned by the Empress to save Pang Ran from humiliation; not even the palace maid by his side had known anything about this...

Chapter 225: The Good-For-Nothing Prince (8)

"Pang Ran, where have you been these past three months? And how have you become like this?"

Pang Zihuang examined Pang Ran from top to bottom as he asked doubtfully.

Right now, he was still digesting all that was happening before his eyes! After all, the thing he had been dreaming of has finally materialized but it was really too difficult to believe. This damned fatty had, in three months, successfully lost weight?

Heavens, allow him a moment of excitement.

"Imperial Father, I did this for you. Do you know how tough these three months have been for me? I had to run from Black Tortoise Country to Azure Dragon Country just to buy a Longevity Pill for you. I even had to go to great lengths to obtain that Longevity Pill! Going back and forth like that, in addition to laboring and toiling with my mind, I've successfully lost weight."

Pang Ran was crying so hard that his nose was running as he invented every sentence and every word about how he had suffered through the three months and had paid such a great price to get the Longevity Pill. The conclusion was basically this - he loved his Imperial Father so much and had suffered so much pain for him. Therefore, no other son was more filial than Pang Ran was.

Pang Zihuang was also crying hot tears by then. "Our good son, you are no doubt our good son. If your third and fifth brother are as thoughtful as you, Imperial Father would be relieved. Right, where is that Longevity Pill? Show it to me quickly."

When he said this, his eyes fixated on Pang Ran anxiously and even his breathing became short.

Even though he was in Black Tortoise Country and had long heard of the Hundred Herb Hall's fame, he had never thought that he would be lucky enough to obtain a Longevity Pill. Therefore, how could this news not excite him?

Pang Ran laughed heartily as he took out a box from within his sleeve. His eyes darted here and there as he said, "Father, here's is the Longevity Pill. However, there is something more important that I must tell you. The master of Hundred Herb Hall, who is also the master of the famous Ghost Doctor, has been painstakingly invited here by me. I have invited her here to help the Imperial Father and to take a look at your body."

Gu Ruoyun had asked him to think of a plan to get her recommended so this should work well enough. At any rate, his task was completed and whatever comes next was up to her...

"What?"

Pang Zihuang's face was shocked. He gripped Pang Ran's shoulders tightly with both hands as his face revealed an undisguised joy.

"Are you talking about the master of Hundred Herb Hall? The Ghost Doctor's master? The genius who had refined the Longevity Pill? Where is she now? Quickly! Quickly invite her in! No, that's not right. For a great person like her, We must go personally! Servant, come at once and help Us prepare!"

As Pang Ran stared at his usually dignified Imperial Father who was now floundering helplessly, he could not help but roll his eyes. In his heart, he was full of admiration for Gu Ruoyun.

He does not know when he would be able to become someone like her. Although she was not an emperor herself, she was able to make an emperor fight to meet her...

"Imperial Father, she is now at my estate. If you were to come with pomp and ceremony, wouldn't that be too rude? I, your

Imperial Son, will now go and invite her to the palace instead. However, it wasn't easy for me to successfully invite her here so Imperial Father, don't let anyone else scare her off."

"Definitely, definitely."

Pang Zihuang's completely excited face was flushed red. If he could only establish a good relationship with the Hundred Herb Hall, it would not just be about the Longevity Pill anymore.

Perhaps, in the days to come, he might even have the chance to buy other even more valuable pills.

That was right, Pang Zihuang was talking about the chance to buy a pill!

One must know that the price of the quota for the Hundred Herb Hall has skyrocketed on the mainland; many others could not even obtain the chance to buy a pill.

Chapter 226: A Familiar Person (1)

"Imperial Father, I will now go to invite the goddess here. However, you mustn't show that wretched look to my goddess! Even I can't stand the sight of it and want to run away when I see it."

Pang Ran rolled his eyes and unceremoniously shot his Imperial Father a disdainful look.

After saying those words, he immediately turned and ran off without a hint of hesitation.

As expected, after three seconds, a furious voice shouted from the room, "You rotten brat, who did you say was wretched? Stand f*cking still and face Us if you dare!"

Pang Zihuang was so angry that he even swore out loud. However, upon hearing those words, Pang Ran ran even faster.

Stand still? Was he crazy? If he does not run away now, his butt would definitely bloom!

"Rotten brat, We are the Emperor of this country! How dare you not even give Us the least bit of f*cking respect!" Pang Zihuang was so angry that he jumped off his seat. This rotten rascal had the nerve to scold him and say that he was wretched? How was he wretched? However wretched he was, he would not be more wretched than that brat!

He swore that if he ever caught him, he would spank him until his bottom bloomed red. Otherwise, he would cease to be identified as the Emperor!

No one could talk him out of this!

...

In the Imperial Advisor's mansion, after listening to his subordinate's report, Lin Yue's already small, squinted eyes got

even smaller. A cold light flashed across his pupils.

"Are you saying that the damned fatty has returned?"

He would never forget the humiliation he had suffered three months ago at that restaurant.

That damned fatty had, in everyone's plain sight, sat his butt upon his body. The worst thing was, he had placed his *sshole right onto his face! Today, just the thought of that scene made Lin Yue feel the urge to tear that damned fatty apart.

This was a level of humiliation that he had never experienced in his entire life!

"Reporting to the Imperial Advisor, the Sixth Prince has successfully lost weight and he has brought in the master of the Hundred Herb Hall. This is the news that I have managed to get after bribing the guards outside the royal study."

The bodyguard answered Lin Yue before lowering his head once more.

"The Hundred Herb Hall?" The corners of Lin Yue's lips curved into a cold sneer and he said mockingly, "Even though that fatty has used God-knows-what methods to successfully lose weight, to say that he has established a connection with the Hundred Herb Hall would be absolutely impossible! What sort of people is at the Hundred Herb Hall? Although I've never seen the master of the Hundred Herb Hall, I also know that the genius young lady whose name has shaken the four nations is the proud and arrogant type. That damned fatty is outstanding at nothing so why would she even notice him? As for the young girl that the fatty has brought back, who knows where she has come from; she's here just to make His Imperial Majesty happy! Whatever the case, I can't let His Imperial Majesty be lied to!"

A hint of viciousness flashed through Lin Yue's eyes and the cold sneer on his face turned ugly.

He really did not know why this damned fatty has gone crazy; he had always given up on himself but now he even knew how to gain His Imperial Majesty's favor? However, no matter how much His Imperial Majesty liked him, it was impossible for him to be the heir to the Emperor's throne.

This was simply because only the Xia family of Heaven City controlled the Imperial succession Black Tortoise Country! That damned fatty, now only a good-for-nothing, would never be allowed by the Xia family to ascend the throne.

All that was the result of him and his younger sister, Imperial Concubine Lin's schemes! Of course, he still played the key factor in this, if he hadn't foretold that the fatty would be a good-for-nothing, Pang Ran would never have been so hard on himself and given up on himself. Although who knows what had motivated him recently to start making an effort but, too bad, he had wasted over twenty years. No matter how hardworking he was now, he would not be able to produce any results.

The Fifth Prince was also an arrogant and despotic scum who constantly looked down on everyone. It was definitely impossible for him to be the Third Prince's rival!

However, if it had not been for this fact, the Fifth Prince would have ended up with the same fate as the First, Second, and the Fourth Prince who have all mysteriously died young!

Chapter 227: A Familiar Person (2)

At the Sixth Prince's estate.

In the distance, Gu Ruoyun could see a figure running towards her. The corners of her lips lifted up into a soft smile.

"Back so soon? How was it? Was your Imperial Father satisfied with your change?"

Hearing these words, Pang Ran was full of grievance and said sadly, "I don't want to talk about it, talking about it just makes me angry! I really doubt that I'm his own flesh and blood, he couldn't even recognize his own son! Before I could even speak to him, that man had rushed up to beat me up! Motherf*cker, it was so painful, I really don't know why his temper is so bad recently."

Gu Ruoyun raised her eyebrows as the smile on her face brightened.

This fatty had previously weighed 250 kilograms and now had an average figure, all the fat on his body has vanished completely. It would have been strange if Pang Zihuang had been able to recognize him at first glance.

"Right," Pang Ran suddenly thought of something and said, "I've already passed on your recommendation to my Imperial Father and my Imperial Father wants to meet you. However, when you meet him, be careful. That old fellow has always been wretchedly savage, he is not a nice person."

It was obvious that there were hundreds of complaints wringing in Pang Ran's heart towards his own Imperial Father.

Whenever he thought of his Imperial Father, he would feel a dull pain on his bottom and an urge to hide as far away as he could.

If Pan Zihuang could hear Pang Ran's words now, it was likely that he would even have the urge to murder him.

Old fellow? Wretchedly savage?

How could he address his own Imperial Father this way? Whatever the case, he was still the Emperor of the nation. This was completely disrespectful to him.

"We shall head to the palace in a while. There's another thing, Pang Ran, I would like to ask you something. Do you want to be Emperor?"

Gu Ruoyun stared at Pang Ran as a sliver of strange light flashed across her eyes so quickly that no one could catch it.

Without even thinking about it, Pang Ran immediately shook his head, "Emperor? That's meaningless, I don't even want to be the Sixth Prince, more so the Emperor!"

"But..." Gu Ruoyun stopped for a while and her eyes full of smiles, "An Emperor gets all the meat that he can eat."

"Huh?"

Pang Ran's eyes immediately widened and his expression became one of fury, "Who was it just now that did not allow me to be the Emperor? I will fight whoever who does not allow it! The Emperor's throne is mine and no one is allowed to take it!"

In the whole of Black Tortoise Country, only the naturally foolish Pang Ran would dare to utter such a sentence. After all, if someone had heard this, he would not only be imprisoned, he could also be accused of trying to usurp the throne.

"Pang Ran, if you want to be the Emperor, I can help you gain the attention of the Xia family. However, you lack an aide to stand by your side."

Suddenly, Gu Ruoyun remembered the devious face that she had seen in that restaurant and an obscure light flashed in her eyes.

"An aide? But who?" Pang Ran watched the young girl's beautiful face dumbfoundedly and asked doubtfully.

"The Fifth Prince."

When she said those three words, Gu Ruoyun could see clearly that Pang Ran was stunned.

It was not an odd reaction on his part, the Fifth Prince had always held a grudge against him and had always been chasing and beating him for so many years. The Fifth Prince had definitely never missed a chance to make the brat suffer.

"Goddess, are you joking? How can he be my aide? Fifth Imperial Brother's natural talent is definitely good but of course, he's far behind compared to you, goddess." As he said this, Pang Ran did not forget to butter up to his goddess. He continued, "However, the character of my Fifth Imperial Brother is not impressive. I like to eat and drink while he likes to play. The brothel is like his home and he is too arrogant and hedonistic. How could someone like him be my aide?"

Gu Ruoyun shot a glance at him: "Do you think that everyone is like you? From the moment I laid eyes on him, I could see through to his true character. I would have guessed that he is the most concealed out of the lot of you!"

Chapter 228: A Familiar Person (3)

She had noticed the forbearance and concealed talent hidden under that lecherous facade. If Pang Rang was to become the Emperor, he must have a capable aide by his side.

The Fifth Prince was an excellent candidate for this position!

However, Pang Ran still felt that it was unthinkable. He scratched his head and his face was full of puzzlement, "Are you saying that Fifth Imperial Brother has another character which is concealed? Why would he do that? Is there any problem that he can't tell our Imperial Father? Why must he change himself into an arrogant and domineering person?"

This fatty was really naive and innocent!

Gu Ruoyun shook her head as she thought, even if Pang Ran has the potential in his character to govern a country well, without a capable aide by his side, he would very soon be sold off and would be counting money for his sellers.

"Pang Ran, are you really that ignorant of the schemes running deep within the Imperial Palace? If the Fifth Prince does not hide his true self, perhaps he would have been killed like the rest of your Imperial Brothers. Think about it, if the both of you are not outstanding enough, who else could the position of the Crown Prince go to?"

"The Third Imperial Brother?" Pang Ran's face turned from green to white and back from white to green. He gritted his teeth and even his voice started to shake, "Are you saying that the deaths of my First Imperial Brother and the others were related to the Third Imperial Brother and Imperial Concubine Lin?"

This fellow was at least not a complete fool, he had immediately caught the meaning behind Gu Ruoyun's words. Right after that, a surge of fury rose from his chest as he viciously said, "Although

I've never met my First Imperial Brother, he's still my brother and we have the same mother. He had died from an incurable disease before I was born but I will never forget how many nights my Imperial Mother had cradled First Imperial Brother's sword as she cried! I will also never forget the days and nights my Imperial Father had spent watching the grieving face of my Imperial Mother as he sighed endlessly! The death of First Imperial Brother is my Imperial Mother's lifelong pain! I will definitely not let anyone who had made my Imperial Mother cry escape through my fingers!"

This time, Pang Ran was thoroughly raging. If those people had done anything to him, he would not be so angry but they had actually killed his First Imperial Brother. Although he had no affections for his First Imperial Brother, he could not pretend to ignore the depressed feelings that his Imperial Mother had suffered through for so many nights.

Anyone who causes the Imperial Mother to be sad deserves to die!

"Don't worry, I'll help you." Gu Ruoyun patted Pang Ran's shoulder as her elegant face glowed with a determined light.

Involuntarily, Pang Ran's heart started to believe her when he saw the young girl's confident expression.

There was nothing that this girl could not do! As long as he had her by his side, every conspiracy would vanish.

"Let's go."

Gu Ruoyun shrugged her shoulders as she folded her hands and spoke with a gentle smile.

Pang Ran blinked as Gu Ruoyun started to walk out of the courtyard. He then hurriedly chased after her, afraid to be left behind.

...

"Brother Yu, wait for me."

In a busy market, a petite figure darted speedily to chase after the youth in front. Her powdered face was full of resentment and dissatisfaction as she gritted her teeth and finally managed to catch up to the youth.

"Brother Yu, aren't we out this time to find a highly-skilled doctor for Uncle Xia? Why do you suddenly want to go to Azure Dragon Country?"

Luo Li did not understand this. Brother Yu had always been sickly and frail since he was young and had even been declared that he would not live past the age of fifteen. However, four years ago, that young man who had always been physically weak to the point where he had to be supported just to walk, had miraculously recovered. That was not all, he has even begun to cultivate at an amazing speed and his natural talent was extraordinary. With one move, he has become the first amongst the young generation in Heaven City.

However, even after knowing Brother Yu for so many years, Luo Li could no longer understand his motivations after his recovery.

This handsome young man has a mysterious aura upon him, causing others to be involuntarily attracted towards him...

Chapter 229: A Familiar Person (4)

After hearing Luo Li's words, the youth who had been walking ahead paused and turned his head slightly. His clear eyes stared at the person who was catching up behind him.

Luo Li was somewhat stunned. Her cute face suddenly blushed a light pink as her eyes gazed dumbly at the youth's handsome face. Nevertheless, she pursed her lips as she said, "Brother Yu, I'm worried about Uncle Xia's sickness. Uncle Xia is the Xia family's Young Master so if anything was to happen to him, the Xia Family would certain be thrown into a mess. We should prioritize finding a skilled doctor for Uncle Xia."

This youth was approximately fifteen years old with a very dashing face. His features were as exquisite as porcelain without a trace of blemish, both his eyes were so clear that anyone looking into them would not be able to keep their heart from beating faster.

"I'm going to Azure Dragon Country to find someone. Other than this person, no one else can cure Father. If you want to follow then don't talk so much, or else I will send you straight back to the Luo family."

The youth's heart started to get strangely excited when he recalled what he had just heard on the street just now.

He slowly took a deep breath to calm the emotions in his heart.

Azure Dragon Country, the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun...

Sister, is that you?

We had gone through a similar change at the same time. If that's not you, I can't think of any other girl named Gu Ruoyun whose personality has undergone such a huge transformation after awakening and skills that are shown to their fullest.

I also can't think of anyone in this world besides you who could

possess such a thorough and complete ability to be able to grow so powerful in a short period of four years' time...

Sister, in our past life, you've had to suffer a lot for my sake. If I can find you in this life, let me protect your peace for the rest of my lifetime.

I will not let anyone who dares to hurt you rest easy!

...

On the street, Gu Ruoyun and Pang Ran were laughing and talking when, suddenly, her eyes froze as she fixed her gaze on a slender, thin figure in front of them. At that moment, her heart began to beat irregularly.

"Goddess, what happened?"

Pang Ran looked confusedly at Gu Ruoyun's sudden change but he could not figure it out in his head. Gu Ruoyun did not reply his question but quickly rushed forward instead. At that time, Pang Ran, who was behind her, could feel the nervousness emanating from the young girl... As well as, excitement?

Who did she see that has caused her typically indifferent and cool self to undergo such a big change?

Clatter!

Just as Gu Ruoyun was about to reach that figure, a luxurious horse carriage sped through the streets, leaving behind clouds of dust that blocked Gu Ruoyun's vision.

...

"Luo Li, I'm leaving."

The youth had not noticed the disturbance behind him. His clear eyes carried a hint of a smile in them as he said, "If you can catch up, then follow me."

After saying this, the youth leaped with one bound and his slender figure turned into a gust of wind which speedily rushed

towards the city gates.

He wanted to reach Azure Dragon Country as soon as possible so he could be reunited that person he had been dreaming of... To tell her that he was still alive and now he now has the power to protect her.

He never imagined that the person he had been longing for was just a few meters away behind him, separated by a carriage...

...

The horse carriage sped past in front of Gu Ruoyun, separating the both of them. By the time Gu Ruoyun had jumped over the horse carriage, the youth's figure could no longer be seen. Still, she was positive that person she had seen was Yu'er!

"He's still alive, he's really still alive..."

Xia Linyu, her only brother, had always been unable to cultivate because he was physically weak. Xia Ming, that b*stard, had looked down on him and in the end, he had even sentenced Xia Linyu to death! The events of that day were still vivid in her mind. Thinking about them caused her to feel such grief that her heart and lungs felt like they were being torn apart! However, what she had never imagined was, not only had she been reborn, her brother was still alive!

Gu Ruoyun became so agitated as she thought about this that tears started to fall.

She had not cried when she was faced with Xia Ming's mercilessness and she never wavered even when faced with Lu Chen's betrayal. Even if she was to face death, she would still choose to die unyieldingly.

This was the third time her tears had fallen.

The first time was when her mother and her grandfather had died tragically!

The second time was when her little brother had been dismembered alive right before her very eyes!

The third time was when she had just found out that her little brother was still amongst the living.

"Yu'er, don't worry. As long as I know that you're still alive, I will find you even if I have to go to the ends of the earth ..."

Chapter 230: To Die A Horrible Death? (1)

Pang Zihuang nervously paced back and forth in the royal study. His eyes frequently flicked towards the door as anxiety crept over his handsome face.

Sh*t! He thought. Why has that little brat yet to return? It has been so long. We are going to give his ass a good whooping once he gets back...

At that moment, the door swung open. Aside from Her Imperial Majesty the Empress, only one other person was allowed to meet him without prior notice. Pang Zihuang, filled with rage, let out an angry roar and rushed towards the door. Before Pang Ran could even react, a strong arm grabbed and smacked him — right on the buttocks.

"You brat!" Pang Zihuang yelled. "When did you return? Do you have any idea how long We have waited for you? Sh*t! You snuck out to eat red roast pork again, did you not? We are going to strike your bottom until it bleeds or We are not fit to be Your Imperial Father!"

To Pang Zihuang, the journey from the palace to the Sixth Prince's mansion would normally take around half an hour, but this guy took three whole hours to get home! He must have given in to temptation and snuck into a restaurant for a snack. After all, it wouldn't be the first time. All it takes is a whiff of meat and the brat would lose himself completely.

Pang Ran, however, had no idea why his Imperial Father went ballistic. To him, he did not do anything wrong! Before he could even begin to make sense of the situation, another hard smack landed on him. Pang Ran jumped in pain and ran for cover, shouting, "Imperial Father! What could I have possibly done to enrage you? Your punishment is not justified – ow! Imperial Father, please stop hitting me! My buttocks are going to split open!

Save me, Goddess! My Imperial Father is going to beat me to death!"

Unable to hide from Pang Zihuang's hand, Pang Ran ignored everything else and dashed towards Gu Ruoyun.

In his eyes, once he hid behind her no harm would come to him.

It was only when Pang Ran called out to Gu Ruoyun that Pang Zihuang realized that she was in the room. He quickly put his hands behind his back. With his handsome face showing clear signs of awkwardness, he said, "You must be Lady Gu Ruoyun, the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall? This brat almost angered Us to death... You must have had a good laugh at the sight of Us."

"Uhm... Well..." Gu Ruoyun said in embarrassment. "Actually... the reason why we arrived so late was not because of His Royal Highness the Sixth Prince's naughtiness... It was my fault. I bumped into an old friend along the way, which caused our delay. His Royal Highness had absolutely nothing to do with it."

"You hear that?" said Pang Ran angrily as he peeked out from behind the young girl, but he quickly hid in fear again when Pang Zihuang shot him a deadly glare.

Suddenly, a booming voice came from outside the royal study: "Your Imperial Majesty, the Imperial Advisor requests an audience!"

The Imperial Advisor? Pang Zihuang thought, creasing his eyebrows.

"Send him in," came his unenthusiastic reply.

Almost instantly, a hand pushed open the door and a white robed Lin Yue entered the room. His gaze swept past Gu Ruoyun and Pang Ran before landing on Pang Zihuang. He stepped forward and joined his fists in a salute before bowing deeply, saying, "Your Imperial Majesty, I, your humble minister, have come before You to request for a fair decision."

The Imperial Advisor held a considerably high position in Black Tortoise Country. He was one of the few who did not need to kneel and kowtow when meeting the Emperor. His privilege could go to such extent not only because he was a clairvoyant, but also because his younger sister had become a small concubine of a relative of the Xia family in Heaven City! Even though the man was only a distant relative, and Lin Yue's sister was merely a concubine – no better than a mistress; so long as one had any connections with the Xia household, even if they were a simple household sweeper, no one would dare to cross them.

Therefore Pang Zihuang had no choice but to show respect to the Imperial Advisor despite his personal disgust towards the man.

Chapter 231: To Die A Horrible Death? (2)

"Imperial Strategist, please state the issue in which you require Our decision."

Actually, Pang Zihuang had already known of the purpose for Lin Yue's visit.

Obviously, Lin Yue had been notified of Pang Ran's return and had come to cause trouble. However, only We have the authority to discipline the prince. We had previously closed one eye to anyone who dared to bully the prince with the intention of helping him lose weight – that fat body of his would sooner or later contract an incurable disease. Now that he has lost weight, he would be faster than anyone who dared to try and touch him!

"Your Imperial Majesty," Lin Yue said. "The Sixth Prince has been neglecting his duties, and is only ever interested in eating, drinking, and merriment! Moreover, he has been wreaking havoc at the restaurants. If it were not for my own good fortune, I would have long been crushed to death by his rear! He would often disappear without Your Imperial Majesty's approval. This is simply an outrage! Furthermore, he has knocked out the Minister of Finance's son... He does not even respect his elder brothers! In addition, he has found a woman to pose as the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall to deceive you! This must be a joke! Why on earth would the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall be here? It is impossible! Your Imperial Majesty, you must punish him for his treasonous acts!"

Lin Yue glared sharply at Pang Ran, whose face was full of objection, with a trace of cruelty hanging on the edge of his lips.

All those years ago, if the trap that they had set for the Eldest Prince had not drawn the attentions of the Xia family, he would not have allowed the Sixth Prince to be born safely. So, in order to prevent himself from getting into further trouble, he could not kill

the Sixth Prince outright. Therefore he had poisoned Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress during her pregnancy so that the prince would be born as a good-for-nothing! Additionally, based on his prophecy, His Royal Highness will never be able to be free of this fate. Who would have thought that this guy would receive inspiration to work hard? Even if His Royal Highness has no chance of improvement, he cannot allow for this confidence. His Royal Highness must revert to his old ways — self-abandonment and only waiting for death!

"Hmph!" Pang Ran snorted. "You say that the Goddess is an imposter. What proof do you have? Have you met the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall before?"

"Proof?" Lin Yue smiled coldly. "Why should my words need proof? I am the Imperial Advisor, I see through everything! Yet my eyes do not see how this woman could possibly have any connection to the Hundred Herb Hall. She is clearly an imposter!"

Lin Yue turned his gaze to Gu Ruoyun, and said, "My lady, please do not be fooled into committing such a wicked deed. Deceiving His Imperial Majesty is high treason, and your entire clan will be slaughtered as punishment. Do not drag your own family members down the gutter for your own personal interests; otherwise, you will die a thousand deaths for your sins. There is nothing in this world that I do not know. I have seen your future and your past, and I know exactly what will happen to you in the future."

Gu Ruoyun's expression had remained indifferent from the beginning. Her eyes stayed still and calmly stared at Lin Yue.

"Your future is riddled with misfortune," Lin Yue continued. "Your clan will be exterminated because of you and you will be left alive and alone, living a fate worse than death, then sold to become someone's concubine and be tortured every day. Finally, you will die a horrible death. But even if you were to reincarnate into a human again, your fate remains similar: Never receiving your husband's love or the pity of your loved ones. So unless your soul

flies away and scatters, you will be plagued with suffering for all eternity."

Gu Ruoyun smiled. No one could tell what that smile meant.

"You are indeed powerful, Your Excellency," she said. "However, have you seen into your own future?"

"Of course," Lin Yue stared coldly at Gu Ruoyun's face and licked his lips. "My fate is to rise above all, to be respected and worshipped by many. It is no use envying me. My great fortune stems from the accumulation of countless merits from my past life. You, however, were a witch who caused destruction, and killed people like ants... Everyone wanted you dead. Even if you were to reincarnate a million times, your life would never end well!"

Chapter 232: A Son With No Asshole (1)

Pang Ran's jaw dropped as if he had just heard something completely unbelievable. He had never really interacted with the Imperial Advisor before and had no idea that he thought so highly of himself.

To rise above all, to be respected and worshipped by many? Tsk, tsk. What did he mean by that? Only a thick-skinned person could spew such shameless statements!

But it was not just Pang Ran who found this pronouncement appalling for even Pang Zihuang's face has turned into a particularly ugly expression.

What a complete disgrace to his own family! Pang Zihuang thought. His Excellency is usually a fairly composed man, but today it seems as though he has been seriously provoked. Has he lost his senses? That must be it!

The more Pang Zihuang thought about it, the more he felt that his theory was sound. He glanced pitifully at Lin Yue's arrogant face, and said, "Your Excellency, I understand the feeling of having Pang Ran's rear on your face, so it's completely understandable that you would've somehow lost your wits. Luckily, the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall is here today. I have heard that she is the Master of the Ghost Doctor herself. Please let her examine you. Such wild behavior will not help anyone."

Upon hearing Pang Zihuang's words of concern, Lin Yue's expression sunk. Even if the person next to him was the supreme ruler of Black Tortoise Country, he had always kept his anger under control.

"Is Your Imperial Majesty implying that this humble minister is brain damaged? And does Your Imperial Majesty wish for this quack of an imposter to cure me?"

This dog of an Emperor dares to chastise me! he thought, angrily. I would have long assassinated him if it were not the Xia family rules against changing dynasties at will in Black Tortoise Country!

"Your mother's *ss!"

Pang Ran was enraged. To him, Gu Ruoyun was an invincible goddess, and this swindling messenger of the gods had dared to reprimand her. He simply could not tolerate it.

With eyes ablaze, Pang Ran pointed his finger at Lin Yue and spat on his face.

"You motherf*cker — you are only the messenger of the gods, not a real god. Even if you are one, one has never seen a god quite as ugly as you. To say you look like a ghost or a goblin is already praise of a high order! Are you not a clairvoyant? Are you not omniscient? Then tell me, what meals did I have yesterday? How many times did I use the toilet? If you cannot even answer these questions, how can you be considered psychic? Come on, tell me my fortune!"

Lin Yue trembled in rage. He touched the spit on his face and glared fiercely at Pang Ran. He then turned towards Pang Zihuang, joined his fists and bowed, saying, "Your Imperial Majesty, His Royal Highness has greatly insulted this humble minister! Please take action on my behalf!"

"Huh?"

Pang Zihuang was shocked. He looked as if he had just woken from a daze, unable to tell between fantasy and reality. "My apologies, Imperial Strategist. We were in the middle of a daydream. What were you all talking about? We did not manage to hear it. Could you please repeat it all over again?"

Lin Yue, you wretched man, he thought. We have never liked the look of you! If it were not for your connection with the Xia family, We would never have allowed this disaster remain in the palace.

And now he has asked Us to punish Pang Ran? Tsk tsk. He must be delusional. What right does an outsider like him have to issue punishments to a son from Our family? Dream on, Lin Yue!

"You... You..."

Lin Yue took a deep breath. He could feel his heart trembling at that very moment. In the end, he decided to calm his rage as his eyes fixed sharply on Pang Zihuang.

"Very well then!" he spat. "Did you forget about the Xia family now, Your Imperial Majesty? Should they ever find out what an incapable ruler Your Imperial Majesty is, gone will be your seat on the Imperial Throne! Hmph!"

Chapter 233: A Son With No Asshole (2)

After finishing his speech, Lin Yue threw his sleeves angrily and made his way towards the door, stopping in front of Gu Ruoyun to stomp his feet. His lips turned upwards into a ghastly curve as he said, "My lady, sometimes when wrong decisions are made, your life could be entirely destroyed. Heed my words, my prophecy will soon come true! Your poor choice will result in a life miserable beyond compare! You will live a browbeaten life for the rest of your days! Hahaha!"

Gu Ruoyun had remained silent since she last spoke, only staring icily at Lin Yue.

"Do not worry, goddess," Pang Ran vowed solemnly, thumping his chest, completely ignoring Pang Zihuang. "I will never allow anyone to hurt you. When I become Emperor, my first order of business will be to send Lin Yue into the dungeon!"

Pang Zihuang was enraged. He swung his leg forward, giving Pang Ran a real good kick in the butt and bellowed, "You dirty little brat! Your Imperial Father is not yet dead and you are already dreaming of becoming Emperor? What? Plotting to seize the throne?"

Pang Ran jumped in pain as he hurriedly covered his rear end and cried, "Spare me, Imperial Father! Spare me! I was wrong! I admit my wrongs! Please stop kicking me, aiyo! If Your Imperial Majesty keeps on kicking me, I will no longer have an asshole! Then all the gossips will say that Your Imperial Majesty has an heir without an asshole!"

"You insolent halfwit, how dare you f*cking curse your Imperial Father! Fine! We will stop kicking you. We will beat you to death instead!"

Watching the scene unfold before her, Gu Ruoyun smiled gently. Although Pang Zihuang was currently beating Pang Ran up with a

stick, she felt a sense of warmth, as if this was not the royal family but an ordinary household. This was the first time she had seen royalty display so much affection...

Of course, what she did not know was that the royal family of Black Tortoise Country fell under the jurisdiction of the Xia family, and the head of the Xia family respected sincerity. This was why they had elected Pang Zihuang to become the Emperor.

"Foolish child, you better remember this!" said Pang Zihuang, gasping for breath while pointing his stick at Pang Ran. "If you ever dare to curse your Imperial Father again, We shall beat you until you are bedridden. And do not even think of crying about this to your Imperial Mother! She has gone to visit her mother for a few days, therefore no one can shield you now!"

Pang Ran tearfully massaged his swollen buttocks, deciding that once he became Emperor, he would give this b*stard a taste of his own bottom-whacking medicine instead. Furthermore, he would forbid him from eating meat for a whole month.

"You are certainly full of energy, Your Imperial Majesty."

In that instant came a soft giggle from a side of the room, abruptly bringing Pang Zihuang back to his senses. He wiped the sweat from his forehead, looking clearly distressed.

"Lady Gu, how ridiculous We must seem to you," he bemoaned. "This son is simply too disrespectful! Ah, right, the reason why We have invited you here is to ask you to examine Our health. Why is it that We have been experiencing such constant headaches. We have seen countless Imperial physicians, and none have been able to solve the problem."

After finishing his explanation, Pang Zihuang fixed his eyes on Gu Ruoyun, and noticed the frown between her eyebrows. His heart gave a loud thump.

Could it be that Our illness is incurable? he wondered.

After a while, the deep lines between the young girl's eyebrows relaxed and a kind of clear brightness shone in her eyes. She asked, "Did Your Imperial Majesty recently touch a plant named *trigonotis peduncularis*?"

Chapter 234: Planting The Blame (1)

Trigonotis peduncularis?

Pang Zihuang furrowed his brows. His eyes were full of suspicion. "What trigonotis peduncularis? We have never heard of such a thing!"

"Trigonotis peduncularis is a kind of poisonous herb. Generally, anyone who comes into contact with it will begin to experience its delayed poisonous effects. If my guess is correct, someone has recently presented Your Imperial Majesty with the plant as a gift. The plant had probably withered within three days, and Your Imperial Majesty has been experiencing acute headaches since then. Is this correct?"

Gu Ruoyun smiled gently, her eyes observing Pang Zihuang from the start. Upon hearing her words, Pang Zihuang's face sank, and his eyes glazed over as if looking at a faraway landscape.

But he remained silent.

Because he would not speak, Gu Ruoyun did not press for a reply. All in all, even though Pang Zihuang was open-hearted, this matter was confidential and he would not expose any palatial matters to an outsider.

"Lady Gu," Pang Zihuang said, taking a deep breath, his expression solemn. "Can We be saved?"

Gu Ruoyun nodded, raising the corners of her lips. "There is a way, however..."

Upon hearing that he had a chance to live, Pang Zihuang burst into joy and quickly said, "Lady Gu, as long as you can save Us, We will fulfill any request!"

"Alright!"

A bright light flashed across her clear eyes, and Gu Ruoyun

smiled radiantly, saying, "Remember your words, Your Imperial Majesty! I will soon write you a list of items. Please ask your men to find all the ingredients listed, and send them to the Sixth Prince's estate. I will provide your medical treatment and administer a cure afterwards. However, you do not have much time. It is best to find the medical ingredients within three days. If we delay any longer, I cannot promise that you will not encounter any problems."

"Lady Gu, We guarantee that We will send over the ingredients in less than three days. You only need to give Us the list!"

"Then... I shall await You at the Sixth Prince's estate."

Gu Ruoyun raised a writing brush, and promptly wrote down the ingredients for the cure on a piece of paper, then left the room with Pang Ran. The moment they were gone, Pang Zihuang's expression turned cold.

"Servant!" he said solemnly. "Take this list to the Imperial Physician's office. Have them send the ingredients on the list to the Sixth Prince's estate immediately! Also, summon Imperial Concubine Lin."

Trigonotis peduncularis...

The very thought of the name froze his heart.

"Nice one, Imperial Concubine Lin," he muttered angrily. "So you have all plotted to harm Us! If that child Pang Ran had not invited the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, We probably would not even know how We died!"

Pang Zihuang gritted his teeth. He had always been particularly generous towards Imperial Concubine Lin on account of her relation to the Xia family.

Who would have known that that woman wanted Us dead! he fumed. The *trigonotis peduncularis* herb had been a gift from Concubine Lin, who told Us that it would help alleviate weariness.

Who would have expected for it to wilt in two days! At the time, We assumed that it was some unknown plant that was difficult to care for. We never thought that it was the cause of our ailment.

At that moment, a luxurious hand as white as jade slowly opened the door to the Royal Study. A gorgeous woman in royal robes entered, her footsteps as light as a lotus, her shimmering features moving ever so delicately. She smiled softly and glided towards Pang Zihuang, before bowing in greeting, "Your servant pays respect to Your Imperial Majesty. This humble concubine does not know why she has been summoned. What does Your Imperial Majesty request?"

Peng!

Pang Zihuang slammed his hand forcefully on the desk. An angry vein rose over his temple — his face was livid with rage.

"Concubine Lin, are you aware of the crime you have committed?"

Chapter 235: Planting The Blame (2)

Imperial Concubine Lin staggered back in fright, her liquid black eyes stared at Pang Zihuang's handsome yet grim face in astonishment.

"Your Imperial Majesty, what has Your humble servant done to deserve Your ire? If I have done anything wrong, I humbly submit to punishment. All I ask for is that Your Imperial Majesty takes care of the Imperial body!"

Her spoken words sounded fair and reasonable. Her lovely liquid black eyes overflowed with concern, almost as if she was sincerely worried about Pang Zihuang's well-being.

"Take care of the Imperial body? Hah!" Pang Zihuang laughed derisively while clenching his fists. His eyes stared coldly at Imperial Concubine Lin's gorgeous face.

It should go without saying that this woman was indeed stunning. Even though she surpassed the Empress in looks, she did not have the benevolence and sincerity of the Empress, who was a motherly figure to the nation; neither did she have the latter's elegance and grace. Therefore, in his heart, none could ever measure up to the Empress, no matter how beautiful they were!

"Imperial Concubine Lin," Pang Zihuang sounded grave as he gritted his teeth. "Do you feel no guilt in the words you speak? We see that you are far too anxious for Us to die an early death so that the Third Prince can ascend the throne! Not on your life! We will not die, no matter what, neither will We allow you to get away with your plan!"

"Your Imperial Majesty?" Imperial Concubine Lin looked up in surprise and asked uncertainly. "Why would Your Imperial Majesty say such a thing? When has this humble servant ever wanted to take the life of Your Imperial Majesty?"

"Hmph! Are you still pretending? A few days ago, you sent Us a potted plant as a gift. Now, We ask you, was the plant called *trigonotis peduncularis*, which contains a slow-acting poison?"

Imperial Concubine Lin's heart thumped loudly. Initially, she assumed that her ploy would have stayed a secret. She did not expect that His Imperial Majesty would have found out about it. It seemed that she could no longer hide it.

So be it, she thought. I shall strike first and gain the upper hand!

Imperial Concubine Lin's eyes gleamed a strange glint at the thought. She lightly puckered her lips and smiled, saying, "It seems that Your Imperial Majesty has found out — what a pity that it is far too late! However, if Your Imperial Majesty is willing to abandon and kill the Empress, then I will gladly give the cure to Your Imperial Majesty. Therefore, whether Your Imperial Majesty lives or dies... stays out of my hands."

Angry thoughts crossed Pang Zihuang's mind: If Imperial Concubine Lin's target had been Us all along, that would have been fine. We did not think that she had wanted to harm the Empress as well!

This was because there were many instances where he, as the Emperor, had no volition, and he had already let the Empress down many times.

How could We have caused another woman to harm her?

"You want to be Empress, Imperial Concubine Lin?" Pang Zihuang laughed in spite of his anger. "Unfortunately, even your finger is unfit to become Empress! There is only one true Empress of Black Tortoise Country! Even if she were gone, We would forever leave her throne empty. So do not even think about it! And do not even think about asking Us to hurt her! The Empress is the love of Our life. Even if We were to die from the poison today, We will never give in to your demands!"

Imperial Concubine Lin laughed coldly, her glamorous face turned icy. Simply due to her old affection for him, she had only wanted him to kill the mother and son, for she would not have been so calculative. She did not expect that he would rather let the poison spread all over his body than kill the Empress.

Nice, very nice! she thought. Then he'll pay the consequences for his stupidity!

"It seems like a choice has been made, Your Imperial Majesty. No matter, Your Imperial Majesty will soon die a very sudden death. The two other princes left in Black Tortoise Country — one is a good-for-nothing, and the other is a drunkard whose only interest is in wine and women. Only my son is fit to carry such a demanding responsibility! Ah, one more thing; I should probably tell Your Imperial Majesty that my elder brother and I caused the deaths of the other three princes — especially the eldest prince! He looked particularly miserable as he died. He even begged me to let the Empress off with her life once I have seized power. Tsk, tsk, now why would I let her live? If it were not for her, I would have become the Empress long ago!"

Chapter 236: Planting The Blame (3)

Imperial Concubine Lin's face twisted into a sinister expression. She laughed maniacally, as if she did not see the Emperor before her.

"You..."

Pang Zihuang clutched his chest with eyes wide open. He felt as if he had trouble breathing, and shot a deathly glare at Imperial Concubine Lin.

He had never felt such hatred in this entire life. Even if he had eaten her flesh and drank her blood, it would never dissolve his loathing.

"It was you," he said aghast. "You were behind the First Prince's sudden death, you were also behind the deaths of the Second and Fourth Princes! Lin Fengyi, if We do not dismember your corpse piece by piece, how shall We ever face Our dead sons or the Empress whose tears wash down Her Imperial Majesty's face every day?"

He let out a huge roar, spurting out a mouthful of blood, his pale face turning chalk white. Pang Zihuang raised his head and glared at Concubine Lin, saying, "What did you do to Us?"

With a frosty smile, Concubine Lin eerily said, "Did Your Imperial Majesty really think I would let You live after my grand confession? Even though I used to harbor feelings for You, I still cherish my life. If I let You go, my death is certain. Therefore I placed a fatal poison on You during the accusation. Oh, and do not bother seeking the guards outside for help, for they have long allied themselves with my brother! What a useless Emperor You are! Not only are You only capable of producing good-for-nothings or dead princes, even the underlings have betrayed You! But worry not, we would definitely need a scapegoat after Your death. Seeing as the Sixth Prince was just here for a visit, my brother will be

sending his men to the Sixth Prince's estate to capture the person responsible for assassinating You—justice is assured!"

Tsk, tsk! she thought.

Pang Zihuang was so enraged, he spat out another mouthful of blood. With his eyes ablaze at Imperial Concubine Lin, he spoke slowly, "Imperial Concubine Lin, if you dare lay a hand on the Empress or Pang Ran, even if We were to become a ghost, We would never let you get away with it!"

In that instance, his face became even whiter with an awe-inspiring expression. For one fleeting moment, Imperial Concubine Lin felt panic, but she quickly regained composure. She curled her enchanting lips and said, "Have You forgotten who my brother is, Your Imperial Majesty? He is a celestial being—respected by all! Do You think that a celestial being would fear ghosts? Besides, with my brother's prestigious rank in the country, if he says that the Sixth Prince was responsible for poisoning You, no one would suspect his words! Besides, as an Imperial Advisor who can read fortunes, his words will never be seen as falsehood. So rest assured, the Sixth Prince and the Empress will be accompanying You very soon. Hahaha!"

Imperial Concubine Lin burst into a laughing fit, looking like a lunatic. Her beautifully coiffed hair had now come loose, masking her gorgeous face.

My Empress, for years I could not match up to You, and His Imperial Majesty remains utterly infatuated with You! She thought jealously. But soon, my son will become the Emperor of Black Tortoise Country, and then death will come for You!

As if she had seen the usually grand Empress crawling at her feet, Imperial Concubine Lin grinned and grinned, looking increasingly deranged.

The Xia family would be the ones to choose the next Emperor, and they would choose members of the royal household. Because

the few princes of Black Tortoise country were either dead or good-for-nothings, the only eligible candidate was her own son, the Third Prince. After all, who else but the Third Prince would be qualified enough to sit on the throne?

"Imperial Concubine Lin, you conniving pair will die a horrible death!"

Pang Zihuang gritted his teeth, his mouth dripping with blood. He had been far too careless to meet Imperial Concubine Lin alone. He could only hope that Pang Ran would remain safe under Lady Gu's shelter. Even if he could not inherit the throne, at least he could have peace...

Chapter 237: Planting The Blame (4)

At the Sixth Prince's estate...

Pang Ran lay on his bed like a dead pig, letting maidservants apply medicine on his swollen red rear. The severe pain made him wail like slaughtered pig, and in his heart he cursed Pang Zihuang.

Mother of--could that jerk not have been a bit gentler? He thought angrily. It was as if he wanted to beat me to death! Am I even his biological child?

Amid his wailing, the bedroom door swung open. He jumped in fright, hastily pulling up his pants, and yelled at the people at the door, "You motherf*ckers! Can you not see that this prince has taken off his pants? Get out of my room!"

Hiss!

The intensity of Pang Ran's movement pulled on the wound on his buttocks. He grimaced in pain, his mood even worse than before.

Incidentally, the person at the door was the Imperial Advisor Lin Yue, and behind him a group of burly imperial guards. He moodily stared at Pang Ran's buttocks. Every time he thought of how the foolish brat's rear had once sat on his face, he had to control himself from tearing those buttocks to pieces.

"Shit!"

Noticing Lin Yue's gaze, Pang Ran clenched his buttocks in shock, and hurriedly covered them with his hands. He backed away, saying, "Lin Yue, I do not have any form of unsavory habits. Do not plan on starting anything with me! I am not interested in those kinds of things, especially because you are so ugly!"

"Pang Ran! Are you looking for death?"

Lin Yue gritted his teeth upon hearing the kid's shameless words,

smiling frostily, "You have conspired to assassinate His Imperial Majesty, and you dared to besmirch the good name of the Imperial Advisor! Your entire estate is now surrounded by the imperial guards—you cannot escape!"

He had always hated the kid.

If it were not for his damned Imperial Mother, he fumed. My little sister could have received her rightful place as the Mother of the Nation. But His Imperial Majesty had been biased. No matter how outstanding the Third Prince had become, His Imperial Majesty still favored this good-for-nothing! Having trash like His Royal Highness alive in the world would only be a waste of food and resources. His Royal Highness' death should be a nationwide celebration! Furthermore, His Imperial Majesty had never appreciated my goodwill, disregarding my hard work for Black Tortoise Country!

"Wait a minute."

Not completely grasping the subject, Pang Ran cocked his head, staring suspiciously at Lin Yue. His tone turned serious, "What do you mean? Conspired to assassinate my Imperial Father? What has happened to my Imperial Father?"

Lin Yue smiled coldly, "Is Your Royal Highness still pretending? You are quite the actor. It is a pity that you never joined the theater, Your Royal Highness! Fine. Because you are feigning ignorance, then as per your request, I will tell! Shortly after your visit with that phony quack, His Imperial Majesty has died from poisoning! Do you dare say that it was not you who poisoned His Imperial Majesty? Pang Ran, you have conspired with an outsider to assassinate His Imperial Majesty! How shall we punish you?"

My sister had given His Imperial Majesty a highly toxic poison which can kill a person in half an hour, Lin Yue thought maliciously. Since it is now approximately half an hour, that Pang Zihuang should be dead by now! Black Tortoise Country will be

ours from now on!

Hong!

Pang Ran's mind went blank after hearing Lin Yue's words.

"Poisoned to death" were the only words in his mind.

No, he panicked, thinking quickly. Impossible! The goddess said that it will take three days for the poison from the trigonotis peduncularis to spread completely! Only a few moments have passed, so how could my Imperial Father have died from the poison? This must be their doing. That's right! My Imperial Father must have met the siblings and was then poisoned! They are the ones responsible for assassinating my Imperial father!

Chapter 238: Planting The Blame (5)

"Lin Yue, you son of a b*tch. I'm going to kill you!"

Pang Ran's eyes turned blood red, like a bloodthirsty wolf ready to kill. He leapt towards Lin Yue with only one thing on his mind—to kill Lin Yue and avenge his Imperial Father!

Bang!

Before Pang Ran could even touch Lin Yue's robes, he was kicked and sent flying by the latter's bodyguards. His body fell onto the bed, shaped like the number eight. Cold sweat ran down his forehead as he gasped for breath.

For the first time, he regretted his lack of training.

For the first time, he felt remorse for ignoring his Imperial Father's advice all these years.

Now he was not even capable of taking revenge.

"Hahaha!"

Pang Ran laughed, insanity creeping up his pale face. His blood red eyes glared at Lin Yue, as if carving his features in his mind's eye to remember his face in his next life.

"Lin Yue, you claim to be a celestial being, yet you commit crimes that only demons would do! You have lied and swindled for many years. Get ready to face retribution soon! You will die a horrible death!"

"Retribution?"

Lin Yue eerily said with a frosty smile, "I have worked hard to accumulate karmic points in my past life. In this life, I have worked hard to contribute to my country and have participated in many charitable works, and killed many evil criminals. Hence, such retribution will never fall upon me! The real people who should face judgement are kinslayers like you!"

Pang Ran's body began to tremble, he clenched his fist and looked at Lin Yue in rage. But the sharp pain in his body made him too tired to stand, much less avenge his Imperial Father's death.

"Where is that phoney Hundred Herb Hall woman, Pang Ran?" Lin Yue slightly squinted his eyes with a cold smile. "Do not try to hide her. Even if I do not manage to deal with her, do you really think that the powers that be of the Hundred Herb Hall would allow anyone to offend their leader? I am doing this for the sake of Black Tortoise Country, or else the powers of the Hundred Herb Hall will bring disaster to our country! I am doing this for the sake of our people! After all, the master of Hundred Herb Hall has an azure dragon and a white tiger as her spirit animals. She is closely linked to the Dongfang family, and has good connections with various powerful entities. Under these circumstances, not even the Xia family would protect Black Tortoise Country!"

No one else knew about the current situation in the Xia family, so how could Lin Yue have known? It has been reported to him that the young master of the Xia family was heavily ill, and the whole family has been in disarray because of it. How could they possibly care about Black Tortoise Country? Hence, he simply did not want to provoke the Hundred Herb Hall—especially not that woman who has been called a demon god by everyone in the Four Countries!

If I could capture this phony Hundred Herb Hall woman, I just might be able to establish good relations with the Hundred Herb Hall, he schemed. I might even be able to request for a slot in the pill-purchasing quota—money certainly cannot buy that!

As for the Longevity Pill that Pang Ran had presented to Pang Zihuang, I did not even bother to give it a second look. After all, none of them had ever seen a true pill; who would have known if it was fake? Pang Zihuang trusted in Pang Ran, which was why he believed in the phony product. I, Lin Yue, would never fall for such things! Those string of pills are merely ordinary medicinal pills.

Pang Ran was only trying to suck up to Pang Zihuang and had lied to him. They cannot possibly be real!

Chapter 239: The Black Tortoise (1)

Pang Ran glared fiercely at Lin Yue, so angry that he wanted to yell at someone. At that very moment, a luminous and elegant figure appeared under the sunlight, wearing the same green robes, her hair cascading like a waterfall, the young girl's lips carried a faint smile, her eyes as clear and calm as still waters.

"Oh? Are you sure that you can use me to win the favor of the Hundred Herb Hall?"

Her tone was so subtle, no one could tell how she was feeling. Only her clear eyes darkened, her lips curved slightly upwards.

Pang Ran wasn't sure why but seeing Gu Ruoyun in this state gave him an indescribable sort of feeling. However, he quickly repressed the unusual feeling upon hearing Lin Yue's solemn voice, "You've arrived just in time. Men, arrest this imposter! I want to present her for her crimes to the Hundred Herb Hall!"

It wasn't because Lin Yue didn't believe in whom Gu Ruoyun really was. If she had been a citizen of Black Tortoise Country, he might have seriously reconsidered. Unfortunately, it was Pang Ran who invited her. Seeing as Pang Ran was such a useless good-for-nothing, how could he possibly have connections with the Hundred Herb Hall?

She's obviously a fake! Lin Yue thought.

Gu Ruoyun completely ignored him and walked straight to Pang Ran who was sprawled on the floor. She then took out a pill and put it into his mouth. Once the pill entered his body, Pang Ran felt completely relieved, his aches and pains disappeared.

God-like! Pang Ran thought, amazed. This was simply miraculous!

Pang Ran's eyes shone, If I had these pills, I wouldn't have to worry about getting beaten up ever again!

"You want to arrest us?"

Gu Ruoyun turned around, speaking calmly, "Alright, I'll take a stroll with you."

Even though Lin Yue could see what Gu Ruoyun was doing, he didn't manage to see what she had fed Pang Ran with. Therefore, he didn't think too much of it, only waved his hand and said, "Men, take these treasonous assassins away!"

"Yes, your excellency!"

A few of the guards advanced to tie them up, however once Gu Ruoyun shot them a look, they jumped and backed away, not daring to take a single step further.

"There is no need for trouble, Imperial Advisor. We will follow you on our own." Gu Ruoyun smiled faintly. "Pang Ran, let's head to the palace to investigate the situation regarding your Imperial Father. Trust in me. Nothing bad will come when I'm around."

Trust in me...

Pang Ran's heart felt moved. He raised his head, looking at the young girl's calm figure. He wasn't sure why, but Gu Ruoyun's words made him believe in her.

Nothing bad will happen with her around!

Hearing her words, Lin Yue smiled disapprovingly.

My little sister has given His Imperial Majesty a highly toxic poison which will spread quickly, killing a person in half an hour. He sneered. Even if they were to see His Imperial Majesty, there wouldn't be any other conclusion! Does she think that she's a god? Even a celestial being won't be able to save a dying man...

...

Heaven City, at the Xia family residence.

Within an ancient secret chamber, an old man carried an expression of respect. His elderly features looked as if he was filled

with pious devotion towards the heavenly object, his body was stooped into a low bow, not daring to raise his head, as if doing so would be blasphemous to the heavenly object.

If the rest of the Xia family were here to see this, they would certainly be shocked! Just who was this old man? He was the Head of the Xia family, the most important person in all of Black Tortoise Country. In this entire world, aside from the Three Great Authorities, to whom would he be displaying such great respect? However, if anyone had seen what was before him, they would have been even more surprised.

The "object" before him was not human, but a spiritual beast with the body of a tortoise and a snake-like head! The spiritual animal sat on an altar and lowered its head to look at the man before him.

Chapter 240: The Black Tortoise (2)

"It's been over thousands of years. Hmph! Your members of the Xia family are completely useless! Many years have passed and you're still unable to find the people I'm looking for! If you're still unable to find my friends within these few years, I will leave the Xia family, and your survival will be none of my business!"

The ancient voice sounded highly displeased, Master Xia began to produce a bout of cold sweat.

"Lord Lingxiao, fret not. I have recently received the information you need, all we need to do is confirm it."

Master Xia could not feel even the slightest discontent, for the reason why the Xia family could remain strong for thousands of years was because they had a strong power overseeing them! This spiritual beast has been around for thousands of years, inherited from generation to generation, and only the heads of the Xia family knew of its existence.

Furthermore, the Xia family has been searching for two people for over thousands of years, yet none of them knew who they were! Obviously, once the head of the Xia family issued an order, no one dared to question it.

"Hmph!" Lingxiao said coldly, "I certainly hope that this information is accurate, otherwise, I will no longer shelter the Xia family!"

If the White Tiger and the Azure Dragon were here, then this spiritual beast must be the Black Tortoise. Unfortunately, they have yet to appear in the Xia family's residence in Heaven City...

Master Xia immediately felt nervous after hearing those words and said hurriedly, "Lord Lingxiao, I've received new information, I've heard that Azure Dragon Country has a strong power backing the Hundred Herb Hall, there are people who have seen the Master

of Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun summoning an azure dragon and white tiger. I would immediately invite her to the Xia Residence, but these words are only rumors and I'm still unable to confirm them. In order to prevent exposing who you really are, Lord Lingxiao, please wait for me to receive confirmation before inviting her over to meet you."

The Black Tortoise Lingxiao paused, muttering incoherently to himself, then slowly nodded his head, "Good. Then I'll give you one last chance! If the information you have is once again false, then I will leave the Xia family immediately!"

"Do not worry, Lord Lingxiao."

A part of Master Xia's heart shook, aside from Lingxiao's protection over the Xia family, it is also closely linked to the Xia family's lifeline. If it were to abandon them, then the Xia family will face extermination after a few generations.

Hence, he must meet that woman, Gu Ruoyun no matter what, and personally confirm the truth behind the rumors.

Lingxiao's true identity was of great importance, hence, prior to confirming whether the Azure Dragon and White Tiger are in the possession of the other party, Master Xia cannot carelessly bring just anyone to meet with him...

...

Meanwhile, in the Xia family courtyard, a middle-aged man stared coldly at his reporting subordinates, and said gravely, "Are you saying that Xia Linyu and that girl from the Luo family have left to Azure Dragon Country?"

"Reporting to Second Master, I've heard that Xia Linyu has gone to Azure Dragon Country to seek Guo Ruoyun of the Hundred Herb Hall, he even says that Gu Ruoyun is the Ghost Doctor's master, and has a great abundance of knowledge in medicine. He believes that she will be able to cure his illness." The guard bowed his head

respectfully as he answered.

"Hehe!"

The middle-aged man laughed softly, and sinisterly said, "Gu Ruoyun? She's only a silly little girl. I don't understand how the shrewd Ghost Doctor could possibly join her, she must have concocted a grand scheme. I do not believe in rumors, neither do I believe that that little girl would possess such capabilities. I'm not even going to give that elder brother of hers a chance! Send your most skilled men to Azure Dragon Country, and find her before Xia Linyu does!"

A shadow fell on his eyes, a cold smile flashed across the middle-aged man's face.

As long as that kid dies, the Xia family will be mine... He thought sinisterly. Gu Ruoyun? Hehe! She's only a little girl in her teens. He will never allow her to foil his plans!

Actually, the middle-aged man wasn't too worried about Gu Ruoyun. His main concern was in the Ghost Doctor's prodigal medical skills, if the Ghost Doctor were to offer help, it would be troublesome. Of course, based on the Ghost Doctor's temperament, it would be extremely difficult to receive her help. However, if he were to murder Gu Ruoyun, and pushed the blame on Xia Linyu's father, no matter how many benefits the Old Master Xia provided, they would never be able to persuade the Ghost Doctor for help...

...

At this very moment, Gu Ruoyun, who was following Lin Yue to the palace, was completely unaware that the Xia family had sent two parties to find her whereabouts. Obviously, those two parties had no idea that the person they were searching for had already left Azure Dragon Country, and was already in Black Tortoise Country in the Court of Jurisdiction of the Imperial Palace...

Chapter 241: The Xia Family Arrives (1)

"Damn it, Lin Yue. I warn you, you'd better not let me catch you! Otherwise, I would have you on your knees calling me master! And you, you bunch of traitors, you have no humanity, you will meet the same end as this swindling Imperial Advisor!"

Pang Ran's curses continued non-stop throughout the journey, frustrating everyone around him who couldn't wait to silence his mouth with a smelly old sock. It was only because of Lin Yue's silence that the guards had forced themselves to remain tolerant. However, their faces were livid every time they heard his ugly words.

"Hmph!"

Lin Yue coldly said, his eyes swept over Pang Ran's face, "You may say whatever you want for now, Your Royal Highness, for you will not have the opportunity to do so soon enough, as you will be sent to the dungeons. Once you've been sentenced, your deaths will come very soon!"

"Who says that I'll be going to the dungeons? I want to see my Imperial Father, and where is my Imperial Mother?"

Pang Ran rolled his eyes, he would never go anywhere near the dungeon. His only concern was his Imperial Father's health.

"Haha!"

Lin Yue laughed loudly, as if he had heard a funny joke, his smile full of ridicule, "You still insist on seeing His Imperial Majesty? Dream on! I will never allow you to go near Him. The dungeons is where you should be. And as for your Imperial Mother... She has already been banished to the [cold palace](#). However, I might let her live, if you begged me."

"F*ck!" Pang Ran was enraged. He raised his head, clenched his fists and charged towards Lin Yue.

This guy has brought harm unto my Imperial Father, and still dared to bully my Imperial Mother. I will never forgive his sin!

However, before his fist could even land on Lin Yue, he was blocked by the latter's hand. Lin Yue smiled gravely at him, and directed a heavy punch towards Pang Ran's stomach.

In that instant, Gu Ruoyun, who had remained silent since their departure from the Sixth Prince's mansion, finally made a move.

She took a step forward, pushed Pang Ran aside with one arm, and stood in his place. The punch that Lin Yue had intended for Pang Ran, landed on Gu Ruoyun instead.

Some of the people around them could not bear the sight of it. To them, the young girl looked frail and thin, a little too thin. She looked much too delicate to even stand, how could she be able to absorb that punch? They reckoned that she would soon spit out a mouthful of blood, and fall dead on the ground.

But then again, everyone else thought, not only did she pose as the Master of Hundred Herb Hall, but she also conspired with the Sixth Prince to assassinate His Imperial Majesty! Hence, these were the consequences of her wrongdoings!

However, the crowds' eyeballs soon fell to the ground.

The young girl that they thought would be spurting out three liters of blood, was instead standing in the same spot, as tall and steadfast as a proud bamboo tree. A small gust of wind blew and her green robes fluttered, her imposing aura created a force field over her delicate figure.

Lin Yue's large arm, on the other hand, now had a bloody gash. Soon, the blood poured over his entire arm, as if it had been split open! Seeing this, the guards who had initially raised their swords, ready to attack, have all involuntarily retreated a few steps backwards, their eyes wide with shock.

Just how much power would one need to have, to reach this

level? One thought.

This woman is clearly abnormal! Thought another.

"Aaargh!"

Lin Yue's eyes turned a bloody red, raised his wounded arm and charged towards Gu Ruoyun again. His eyes burned with hatred, his aura was cruel and sinister.

Die! He thought. This woman must die! Otherwise, the hatred in my heart will never be resolved!

The cold palace in Chinese means a palace where the wife or concubine of an emperor resides when the emperor doesn't like her anymore or she commits a crime which cannot be forgiven by the emperor. However, in the Forbidden City, you won't be able to find any place that has such a name. This doesn't mean it didn't exist during the past dynasties. It means that it is one of the discarded, remote or disliked palaces in the Forbidden City. Those where the places that served as cold palaces.

Chapter 242: The Xia Family Arrives (2)

This time, Gu Ruoyun remained still, her proud figure stood beautifully upright against the gentle winds, her pure, beautiful face was enveloped in a faintly bright light, her eyes were like clear black pools of water, calmly staring straight at the clamoring man charging towards her.

Awoooo!

Without a warning, a large snow wolf leaped from behind Gu Ruoyun, opening its wide mouth and bit the man's thigh ferociously. Its sharp teeth sank deep into Lin Yue's thigh, blood poured out from its mouth.

The intense pain made Lin Yue's entire body shake, but most of it was due to shock.

A spiritual beast! He thought in shock. This woman has a spiritual beast! However, the appearance of this spiritual beast happens to confirm that she is not the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall!

There have been many rumors surrounding the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall, the most impressive of all was her control over Azure Dragon and White Tiger, not a single one of them had mentioned that she also had power over a snow wolf.

Pang Ran's eyes widened, he had a strong urge to shout out loud.

Too cool! He thought, excitedly. That's a spiritual beast! A majestic snow wolf, I've never seen such a powerful spiritual beast!

However, upon hearing Gu Ruoyun's calling out the snow wolf's name, Pang Ran's expression cracked immediately.

Baobao? He thought. What... What kind of a name was that? This majestic snow wolf, was actually given such an adorable name?

As a matter of fact, in the beginning when Gu Ruoyun gave the

snow wolf its name, it was vehemently against it. But its protests were of no avail. In the end, it accepted the name.

"You damned girl, have your snow wolf release me immediately! Or else, don't blame me for being impolite!"

Lin Yue's face turned white from the pain, he roared angrily, his body shook violently. The loss of blood from his wound was weakening him.

Hence, that one statement sapped out most of his energy.

Gu Ruoyun curled her lips and she moved slightly. She smiled and quietly said, "They're here."

Here? What's here? Pang ran questioned, staring at Gu Ruoyun's smiling face, blinking his eyes in confusion. Just as he was about to ask Gu Ruoyun what had happened, the sound of a uniformed march could be heard from ahead.

He turned his head to find his richly-dressed Fifth Imperial Brother leading an armor-clad middle-aged man towards them.

The middle-aged man waved his hand, ordering the soldiers behind him to stop, and strode towards them.

"General?"

Why is the General here? Pang Ran didn't understand any of it. What's happened? Why has the General brought so many people here?

Lin Yue was equally confused. However, remembering everything that Gu Ruoyun had done to him, he hurriedly said, "Oh great General! Make this woman release me!"

The General, however, never even looked at him. Instead, he made his way towards Pang Ran.

The General kneeled before Pang Ran, in front of everyone, and said respectfully, "Your Royal Highness, the Sixth Prince. This vassal has arrived late, please forgive me, Sixth Prince!"

Before Pang Ran could fully realize what was happening before him, the sound of Lin Yue's voice came shouting angrily, "General! Do you want to wallow in the mire with these traitors? He stabbed His Imperial Majesty in the back! Not only are you not arresting His Imperial Majesty's assassin, but you're helping him as well! Are you not afraid of angering everyone else?"

The General glanced sideways at Lin Yue, coolly said, "Your Excellency, the Imperial Advisor. I'm afraid that you of all people should understand the reason behind all this! The Fifth Prince has summoned me after witnessing everything! What more do you have to say?"

Chapter 243: The Xia Family Arrives (3)

In Black Tortoise Country, many people considered the Imperial Advisor as a man of the gods. However, only the General never paid any attention to him.

He had always felt that the Imperial Advisor was no more than a cheating swindler. Knowing the past, present and future... What nonsense! Only a bunch of idiots believed his words.

"Fifth Imperial Brother?"

Pang Ran blinked his eyes, staring at the Fifth Prince confusingly.

He didn't know why, but he felt that his Fifth Imperial Brother looked particularly different. However, he simply couldn't put his finger on it.

"General!"

Lin Yue was angered to his very core. Unfortunately, with his thigh firmly in Baobao's mouth, he didn't dare make a single move. He was only able to glare furiously at the General's expressionless face, then sweeping his eyes towards the Fifth Prince. Suddenly, he laughed, and taunted, "I understand now... You were all conspiring against His Imperial Majesty. Are you not afraid that your families will be slaughtered by nine generations?"

He was actually gritting his teeth through those last few words.

However, in the end, the General didn't even raise his eyelids, his voice coldly said, "Men, take Lin Yue away! I will now make my way to visit His Imperial Majesty."

"Yes, Lord General!"

Hearing this, Baobao finally released its grip, raising its paw, sending Lin Yue flying towards the army with one giant slap. Just as Lin Yue was scrambling to get away, countless weapons raised towards him. He couldn't get away now.

The Fifth Prince walked towards Gu Ruoyun's side, his eyes full of gratitude. He hesitated slightly before finally saying, "Thank you."

This time, Pang Ran was completely dumbfounded, he rubbed his head and said, "Goddess, what... What's going on?"

How could I not have known that the goddess and my Fifth Imperial Brother had already known each other? He thought, bewildered. Aside from that one time in that restaurant.

Gu Ruoyun smiled softly, giving no explanation.

Once she and Pang Ran had left the palace, she knew that Pang Zihuang would have immediately questioned Concubine Lin, based on his temperament. So she went off to find the Fifth Prince. Initially, he was astonished at her visitation, but upon discovering that Pang Zihuang's life was in danger, he immediately recovered his natural instincts.

Then, Gu Ruoyun gave him a string of Antidote Pills, asking him to head to the palace immediately, and to feed them to Pang Zihuang once Concubine Lin had left.

She strongly believed that the Antidote Pills would work because based on Pang Zihuang's strength, even secret attempts of assassinations didn't work on him, only poison! The Fifth Prince had indeed heard a lot of shocking information, and sneaked in to feed the Antidote Pills to Pang Zihuang after Concubine Lin and her brother left, then summoned the General for his help.

As for the reason why Gu Ruoyun did not warn Pang Zihuang of the danger before him, it was entirely because she wanted to use the opportunity to expose Concubine Lin and her brother's wild schemes. This way, Pang Ran would be able to inherit the Imperial throne. When all is said and done, it was merely a trigonotis peduncularis plant. That would not be enough to accuse them of treason. After all, they could simply make up an excuse to say that they had never seen the trigonotis peduncularis plant, and Pang

Zihuang wouldn't be able to do a thing...

"Hahaha!"

Suddenly, a loud laugh came from Lin Yue's mouth, "Do you really think that the General can save you? Have you both forgotten who I am, Fifth and Sixth Prince? The Xia family's young master, Xia Yu, is my brother-in-law, if you lay a hand on me, the Xia family will never let you go! And you, Pang Ran, did you think that you could become Emperor just because you've defeated us? Keep dreaming! Haven't you heard of keeping the goodies within the family? Why would the Xia family let an outsider like you become the Emperor?"

Chapter 244: The Xia Family Arrives (4)

Pang Ran rolled his eyes and replied disdainfully, "What do you mean the 'Xia family's young master'? Only those directly descended from the family deserve that title, that guy is only a distant relative. To put it kindly, he is a member of the Xia family. To put it nastily, he's only a distant relation of the Xia family, especially since you aren't really his father-in-law. Your little sister is only a lowly concubine! The connection is far too messed up to even go anywhere. Generally, only the brothers of true wives deserve to be called brother-in-laws, what are you?"

Pang Ran spoke the truth. Upon hearing those words, Lin Yue's face burned with fury, but he covered it quickly with a cold smile, a malicious intent flashed in his eyes.

"Pang Ran, you think it's that simple, don't you? My brother-in-law has long intended to purchase a string of Longevity Pills from the Hundred Herb Hall. Whatever sins this woman has committed in the past, she should not have impersonated as a person from the Hundred Herb Hall. So I sent word to him, and he should be on his way here. Haha! As long as he hands this woman over to the Hundred Herb Hall, they would always remember him for his deed and allocate a slot for him in their quota. Do you think anyone could withstand the attractiveness of those pills?"

Lin Yue smiled coldly. He had always known that if he were to ever make a move against Pang Ran, that stubborn General would never sit idly by, he had always disliked him! Hence, for extra insurance, he sent someone to inform Xia Yu of this. True enough, once he had heard that someone was impersonating the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, Xia Yu wasted no time. In his eyes, this woman would be his bargaining chip to win the favor of the Hundred Herb Hall.

A proud organization like the Hundred Herb Hall would never allow anyone to impersonate their own master! He thought.

"Hehe!" Lin Yue laughed softly, and said icily, "Pang Ran, if you didn't make anyone impersonate the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, I would not have been able to make anyone from the Xia family react. This is what you would call, don't invite death unless you wished to die! You did this to yourself! Did you really think that you could rely on your own strengths to oppose the powers of the Hundred Herb Hall? Dream on!"

The General furrowed his brows and glared at Lin Yue frostily. If the Xia family were to get involved in this, it would indeed be a problem...

"Men, lock him up!" ordered the General, his wrinkled brows relaxed.

Just as he issued the order, a sneering laugh was heard, the arrogance in the voice was incomparable.

"Lin Yue is one of my own, I'd like to see who's dared to mark himself with death and laid a hand on him!" A middle-aged man dressed in gray robes appeared, walking slowly towards them. His stature and looks were considered average, sheer arrogance gleamed in his sharp eyebrows, his eyes swept across the people before him in disdain.

While he did not possess much power in the Xia family, to most people, having the Xia name gave him the right to treat everyone with arrogance! He looked at the lowly peasants with an air of extreme superiority.

"Young master Xia Yu."

Lin Yue's eyes brightened. He hurriedly said, "Young master Xia Yu, please save me! The Sixth and Fifth Princes have joined forces to orchestrate my death, the General is on their side, and that audacious girl, impersonating the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall! They placed no importance to the dignified Xia family!"

"The Princes of the Imperial Household?"

Xia Yu looked scornfully at Pang Ran and the Fifth Prince, and laughed mockingly, "You are mere dogs to the Xia family! Isn't the Imperial Household supposed to listen to the orders of our Xia family? You, little Princes, dared to harm one of my own? What daring of heavenly proportions! Even dogs learn not to bite their masters, this world has certainly changed, no?"

Chapter 245: The Xia Family Arrives (5)

Pang Ran and the Fifth Prince's faces turned ugly. It's true, the Xia family had complete control over the succession of the Imperial Throne, but the Imperial Family certainly were not the Xia family's dogs! Aside from the line of succession of the Imperial Throne, other matters were determined by the Imperial Family themselves. The Xia family has never interfered. Yet this guy has humiliated them to such a degree!

However, compared to Pang Ran's temper, the Fifth Prince was far more stable. His eyes looked solemnly at Xia Yu, not saying a word.

Over the years, he has learned to conceal his emotions, otherwise, he probably would have been assassinated a few times already...

Noticing Pang Ran's urge to step forward in anger, Gu Ruoyan raised her hand, blocking his way. Her clear, beautiful eyes fell on Xia Yu's face, smiling softly, "It would seem that even the Head of the Xia family has never made the Imperial Family of Black Tortoise country his watch dogs, could it be that you have greater rights than the Head of the Xia family himself? Or have you always been yearning for the position as the Head of the Xia family? Do you plan on going beyond the sacrificial altar and taking over their kitchen?"

Her smile was light and clear, her eyes like sharp rays of light stared straight at Xia Yu.

Now it was Xia Yu's face that had turned an ugly shade. He was merely distant relative and did not have a prominent position in the family. However, the young girl's words had undoubtedly pushed him to where the wind and waves are the fiercest. If Master Xia heard this, he would never let him hear the end of it! Evidently, he had underestimated this clever and eloquent woman.

"Hmph!"

Xia Yu showed his disagreement, curled his lips coldly and shot a glance towards Gu Ruoyun's calm face, "You're the girl who's impersonating as the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall? You're already powerless to defend yourself, and yet you're still involving yourself in this matter? You're truly reckless!"

At that very moment, Pang Ran's clenched fist began to shake, his heart was desperately worried over Pang Zihuang—they've been standing here very far too long. He did not know if his Imperial Father could hold on any longer.

"Let's go."

As if reading Pang Ran's thoughts, Gu Ruoyun's eyes swept briefly over Xia Yu's arrogant face, coldly turned her gaze away, and icily gave the order, "Baobao, if anyone dares to stand in my way, kill without mercy!"

Kill without mercy—

The three words spoken sounded like thunder, exploding beneath the skies, making Lin Yue's face, which was originally filled with hope, fall like dead ash.

He had initially thought that this imposter would have been afraid of the Xia family; instead, she didn't even bother with giving face to them.

This is it. We're truly finished... He thought hopelessly. No! I don't want to die! Especially not in this uncomfortable place!

"Fifth Prince, Lord General, both of you and this woman will die a horrible death! Haha, I've already seen your destinies! If you kill me now, your days in the future will be filled with immeasurable suffering!"

"And you, the soldiers and officials of Black Tortoise country, my heavenly eyes have seen it, it was the Sixth Prince and this woman who conspired to poison His Imperial Majesty! Are you really

siding with the enemy? How could my words possibly be lies? If you are truly loyal to His Imperial Majesty, you will join me and kill this wicked woman and avenge His Imperial Majesty!"

"Since I can read fortunes, I know what happens next, and soon the Hundred Herb Hall and the powers of the Xia family will arrive! If you help me defeat this woman, I will ask them to take pity on you, and request for you to receive a string of pills from the Hundred Herb Hall! Do not be afraid of their words! This woman may have a Martial King level spiritual beast, but the most powerful men of the Xia family are arriving soon, you only need to hold on for a little longer, and then you will receive endless glory and riches!"

Chapter 246: The Xia Family Arrives (6)

Since the altercation began, many people had gathered in the entire passageway.

That included guards and eunuchs, even officials who have heard of His Imperial Majesty's demise due to poisoning.

In their opinion, every word the Imperial Advisor says is the truth. Since he says that that woman must die, she must die! Comparatively speaking, they would be able to meet with the Hundred Herb Hall and the most powerful men of the Xia family!

Hence, they all thought, as long as we defeat her, we will receive countless glory and riches!

Even though Xia Yu felt that Lin Yu's words were disgraceful, once he thought of how Gu Ruoyun had embarrassed him, he decided not to dispose him, only staring coldly at her pure and beautiful figure.

"I promise in the name of the Xia family, Lin Yu speaks the truth! The Xia family will reward whoever that defeats this woman with countless benefits!"

Upon hearing Xia Yu's words, the crowd rolled up their sleeves for battle, staring greedily at Gu Ruoyun's face.

"Grr!"

Baobao let out a low growl, its vicious pupils swept across the faces of the people who were preparing to step forward and its eyes were filled with menace.

A spiritual beast at Martial King level was certainly a huge threat to them, but the thought of obtaining a pill and promised rewards, the crowd marched forward after retreating two steps back.

People forget their fears when faced with greed.

They believed that since the Imperial Advisor had already seen

their futures, it proved that no harm would come to them. This woman is the one who will die. So why should they retreat?

"Hahaha!"

Witnessing the situation, Lin Yue laughed loudly, his eyes were burning with sinister venom, coldly focusing his attention on the pure and beautiful figure.

"Damned girl, still remember my prophecy for you? Your entire family will die a horrible death because of you! Only you will survive, and end up sold off to become someone's concubine, and live the rest of your life in suffering! This prophecy will soon be fulfilled. So what if you had the General's protection, or a Martial King spiritual beast in your possession? Can you oppose the colossal powers of the Hundred Herb Hall and the Xia family?"

Death? That would be too easy for the girl! He thought. Since she was willing to throw away her own life by helping that good-for-nothing Pang Ran, she must bear the consequences! In order for everyone to understand the accuracy of his prediction, this woman must be sold off to become someone's concubine! Haven't I been doing this for many years?

From the very beginning, in order to be seen as a living and breathing celestial being, he had always predicted the fortunes of others, and then sneakily made his own predictions come true. He has even gone so far as to wipe out a few families for this! Of course, those people were innocent, but so what? For the sake of his rank and title, it didn't matter how many people had to die.

True enough, after everything he had done, he had become the Imperial Advisor of Black Tortoise Country, respected by all, because his predictions were never wrong!

Lin Yu smiled sinisterly as if he had already seen Gu Ruoyun's exceptionally miserable face, while he was the Imperial Advisor, set up on high, receiving high esteem and admiration from the entire world.

"Are you quite certain that the Hundred Herb Hall would lay their hands on me?"

Right when Lin Yue was indulging in flights of fantasy, a sound of light laughter was heard, and his heart thumped. He quickly regained his senses, smiled coldly and said, "Of course!"

"Oh, really?"

Gu Ruoyun smiled faintly, her finger stroking her chin, "Since when has the Hundred Herb Hall begun to listen to your commands? I've never heard of it. Unless you're implying that the Hundred Herb Hall actually belongs to you?"

Chapter 247: The Xia Family Arrives (7)

"Hmph, of course the Hundred Herb Hall wouldn't listen to my orders! However, you've impersonated the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall. This crime is heavy enough for you to be sentenced to death a million times! Furthermore, the Hundred Herb Hall is now as bright as a sun at midday. Many powerful men want to win their favor in order to obtain their pills. You've provoked such a fearsome power, and you still want to remain self-righteous? Keep dreaming!"

Lin Yu smiled coldly, his eyes looked at Gu Ruoyun's curled lips coldly, solemnly marking her as a dead woman.

"Is this guy an idiot?" Pang Ran stared disdainfully at Lin Yu, as though he were a complete idiot, saying such words in front of the owner of Hundred Herb Hall, even saying that their master should die a million times?

Has he taken his daily medication? Pang Ran wondered.

Honestly speaking, Pang Ran trusted Gu Ruoyun completely, never doubting her identity. Besides, Gu Ruoyun could present so many pills without hesitation. No one in this world would have such an ability unless they were from the Hundred Herb Hall.

Does Lin Yue or the Xia family have such abilities? He wondered. Even the Three Great Authorities would not have such boldness!

"When have I ever said that I wanted to appear self-righteous?" asked Gu Ruoyun with a small smile on her face. "Since you've asked to meet the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall, then I'll grant your wish! Baobao, head to the Soaring Phoenix Palace and protect Her Imperial Majesty the Empress."

Imperial Mother? Pang Ran quivered, How could I have forgotten, my Imperial Father had already been poisoned, I myself am on the brink of a crisis, that wicked Concubine Lin would never

let my Imperial Mother get away!

"Is this woman an idiot?"

Seeing what Gu Ruoyun had done, the crowd was confused.

That Martial King spiritual beast was this woman's guardian, and yet she ordered it to leave? They questioned. Once the spiritual beast leaves, it wouldn't help the situation despite the General's presence. After all, this distant relative of the Xia family was a high-level Martial General! One level higher than the General himself!

Even the General thought of this and furrowed his brows. However, he stayed silent, and issued an order, "Soldiers! Protect the safety of the Princes and this lady!"

"Yes, sir!"

In that instant, the soldiers drew their weapons and created a formation around the three.

Upon seeing this, Xia Yu sneered scornfully, his eyes taunting, "Bunch of crickets and ants! You'd dare make an enemy of the Xia family? Very well! You'll soon regret your decision!"

Swoosh!

Xia Yu's body was like lightning, as fast as a hurricane. A large sword appeared in his hand, directed towards Gu Ruoyun to strike her head-on.

He believed that the only one who was even remotely threatening was Gu Ruoyun.

Especially since this woman had gone as far as to slander me, I must make her die a horrible death! He thought.

Gu Ruoyun's had a small smile on her face the entire time, and show no sign of using any form of defense. Her beautiful eyes remained as calm as water, remaining silently steadfast in front of the crowd, independent of the world. At that moment, all the

weaknesses in her body were exposed to Xia Yu. He only needed to reach her to end the woman's life.

Xia Yu laughed disdainfully, I thought this woman had some sort of ability! I certainly never thought that she would collapse at the first blow. Doesn't she know her weaknesses must be concealed when facing a master? What did she do instead? She's actually just quietly waiting to die!

That's right.

Exposing your weaknesses when facing a master, is a very fatal move!

Unfortunately, in Gu Ruoyun's eyes, Xia Yu was no master. She had no need to conceal anything.

Chapter 248: The Xia Family Arrives (8)

"Hong!"

A stream of green aura came rushing out when Xia Yu was about to reach her, sending his body flying like a heavy weight streaking across the sky, before being forcefully thrown onto the ground.

"This... This aura..."

Before he could fully understand how he could have been flung by Gu Ruoyun, he was shaken by the latter's terrifying aura. He widened his eyes in shock and disbelief at the calm and composed young woman as his body shuddered, "A high-level Martial King, there is no mistake! She is a high-level Martial King!"

"What? A high-level Martial King? Impossible, just how old is this little girl? Such a young high-level Martial King, that's impossible!"

"But... But that's what Xia Yu of the Xia family said himself, and he's a powerful high-level Martial General. She's also managed to send him flying in an instant with one blow, who else could possibly do this aside from a high-level Martial King?"

Hisss!

The crowd was filled with an outpouring of shock.

This lady did not look older than eighteen years of age, such a young high-level Martial King, is the world turning into heaven?

Lin Yu's face turned pale and stared straight at the young woman's pure and beautiful face. He gritted his teeth in hatred, mostly due to his trembling heart! Never in his wildest dreams would he have guessed that this imposter would actually have been a powerful Martial King!

Out of everyone else, only Pang Ran did not seem the least bit surprised. Instead, he observed the faces of the shocked crowd. Not

to forget that he had previously caught sight of Gu Ruoyun's breakthrough to the Martial King rank. His reaction then was much bigger than everyone else in the area, nearly wanting to cut a sliver in the latter's body to check its structure.

Is there a need to be so perverse?

Three months ago, Gu Ruoyun was rapidly improving while training Pang Ran at the same time. That was when she had her breakthrough to Martial King!

"Didn't you say that the Hundred Herb Hall would never let me get away?" asked Gu Ruoyun with a slight smile on her face.

Lin Yue angrily grit his teeth and said, "Even if you are a Martial King, there is also a high-level Martial King residing in the Hundred Herb Hall. Besides, I hear that the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall has an Azure Dragon and a White Tiger as her spiritual beasts, do you think that you can oppose such a power by simply relying on your own capabilities? You really don't know when to give up!"

Lin Yu was banking on making Gu Ruoyun fear the powers of the Hundred Herb Hall, as long as she was afraid, they would still stand a chance.

"The Azure Dragon and the White Tiger?" Gu Ruoyun dug her ears, laughed softly and said, "Do you mean these two?"

Hong!

At that moment, the heavens and earth seemed to have lost their colors.

Two beams of light erupted from Gu Ruoyun's body, one green and one white, intertwining towards the skies until the green light shot up towards the skies, and the white light landed on the ground, both taking the shape of two large bodies.

"So it is you who dares to insult my mistress?"

Yunyao smiled softly, stepping gracefully towards the flabbergasted Lin Yu, her fierce tiger-eyes alight with fiery rage, smoke erupting from dense clouds.

She had long disliked this shitty Imperial Advisor, who had the audacity to lay his hand on the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall. He didn't even bother to look into who her mistress really was! Would her mistress have worked hard in building up the Hundred Herb Hall for this bunch of b*stards?

Is this man insane? Yunyao thought.

Chapter 249: The Xia Family Arrives (9)

"The Azure Dragon? The White Tiger? Heavens! It's really the two spiritual beasts, the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger!"

"My ass! Is there some sort of mistake, didn't they say that the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall only had these two great spiritual beasts? Besides... An eighteen-year-old woman, a young and peerless genius! Aside from the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, who else would have such powerful talent? We've definitely been deceived by the Imperial Advisor this time!"

"What Imperial Advisor? He's only a spiritual scoundrel! If he had such knowledge of past, present, and future, how could he have been unable to predict someone's identity? All these years, we've completely wasted our time in admiring this man!"

Hearing the surrounding noise, Lin Yu's face turned from green to white, then white to green again.

It was obvious that he was frightened!

Was this woman truly the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall? What rank or talent did Pang Ran have to establish a connection with such a person?

No! I don't believe it!

This isn't real!

"Don't listen to that woman! That's not even the Azure Dragon or the White Tiger! She's using some way to trick us, she's a fake! How could a good-for-nothing like Pang Ran have met the owner of the Hundred Herb Hall?"

Lin Yu bellowed madly.

However, no paid him any attention, even Xia Yu was scrambling to find a way out of this.

This is all that idiot Lin Yu's fault! He thought, angrily. He dared

to tell me things without confirming the situation! I had wanted to establish a relationship with the Hundred Herb Hall and use it to my advantage. This is the complete opposite, I've insulted the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall!

Xia Yu felt his body burn with rage at the thought, he walked straight towards Lin Yu and fiercely kicked him, saying angrily, "Lin Yu, you've brought calamity upon me! For so many years, how many lives have you destroyed in order to prove that your predictions were accurate? How many families have you ruined? I closed my eyes to it all on account of Lin Die'er! This time, it's even better, you've even set your sights upon the Hundred Herb Hall, even if you f*cking want to die, don't drag me down with you!"

Shuaaa!

In an instant, the crowd exploded. No one could believe what their ears, their astonished eyes fell on Lin Yu's dusty face.

"What did Xia Yu of the Xia family just say? In order to prove himself, Lin Yu destroyed many lives?" said one.

"Oh, I've said this before, how could his predictions have possibly been so accurate, until all hell would break loose on a person who would die in no more than two days, even giving out 'predictions' on which family would be entirely exterminated, and they would indeed be exterminated by the second day, I really thought that his words came from the celestials, turns out that I was used! I have never met such a selfish and conniving man, too damned shameless!"

The crowd scolded Lin Yu viciously as if they had forgotten that they were all completely bewitched by Lin Yu to go against Gu Ruoyun.

"Yunyao, Tianqiong, watch Xia Yu and Lin Yu for me. Pang Ran, let's go visit your Imperial Father, He should be waking up soon."

What?

Lin Yu's eyes widened, he exclaimed in surprise. "Pang Zihuang is still alive? That's impossible!"

Upon uttering his final word, he was immediately astonished at what he had revealed. He was so afraid that he began to tremble, his face turned pale.

"Lin Yu, you've finally confessed to causing harm upon His Imperial Majesty?" the General smiled coldly, "Furthermore, the fact that His Imperial Majesty is still alive must be a huge disappointment to you, am I right? However, this General will not exceed one's place and meddle in other people's affairs and punish you. We'll wait until His Imperial Majesty awakens to take action! You'd better behave yourself! Hmph!"

The General straightened his sleeves and followed Gu Ruoyun towards Pang Zihuang's palace.

At that moment, Lin Yu's looked as dead as ash, his eyes full of despair.

He suddenly remembered something, and his eyes lit up with hope again...

The Third Prince!

That's right. The Third Prince was not in the Imperial Palace at the moment, but as long as he was alive, there was still a chance for them to take revenge and wipe up this grudge.

Chapter 250: The Xia Family Arrives (10)

At the Soaring Phoenix Palace.

Imperial Concubine Lin sat gracefully on a luxurious chair. Her long fingers softly caressing a gold phoenix robe, a complacent smile hanging on her lips. Her beautiful eyes glanced at the woman held to the ground by a guard and said in a provocative voice, "I just don't understand how a face like Yours could receive so much love from His Imperial Majesty. I'm a thousand times prettier than You, so why won't he pay full attention to me? All the pampering I've received is probably on account of the fact that my little sister is the concubine of the nobleman Xia Yu."

She couldn't accept it. The Empress certainly wasn't beautiful or all that virtuous. She wasn't even from an all-powerful background, so why did His Imperial Majesty choose her to become his Empress?

The title of the Empress should be mine!

I'm the only one who is suited to be the Mother of the Nation!

The Empress raised her head, smiling coldly and staring daggers at Concubine Lin, whose gorgeous, delicate face was as beautiful as peonies, "Imperial Concubine Lin, We are the Empress of this country, you stormed in and broke into the Soaring Phoenix Palace, aren't you afraid that His Imperial Majesty will punish you for your impudence?"

"Hahaha!"

Imperial Concubine Lin laughed loudly, her blood red nails lightly tracing the intricate phoenix embroidery on the phoenix robe, her eyes filled with taunting.

"This phoenix robe is really beautiful, it's a waste for You to be wearing it. In this entire world, only I can truly bring out its beauty! Don't You agree, Your Imperial Majesty, the Empress?"

She laughed mockingly, raising her head to observe the Empress' changed expression, "Besides, His Imperial Majesty has met His demise, so don't even hope for Him to come save You. Furthermore, the one behind His Imperial Majesty's demise was Your precious son, Pang Ran. Tsk tsk. That Pang Ran sure is bold, conspiring with an outsider to assassinate His Imperial Majesty. The Imperial Advisor is now on his way with his guards to lock him up, he will be beheaded soon!"

Hong!

Like a bolt of lightning appearing from clear skies, the Empress' cold, indifferent face immediately turned pale. Her body began to tremble, her dark eyes showed deep pain. His Imperial Majesty has met His demise? And the one responsible for it, was Ran'er?

How could it be? This cannot be true! It's definitely not true!

"It was you!"

Suddenly, the Empress reacted, struggling to charge towards Imperial Concubine Lin, Her eyes filled with fiery rage, she looked as though was ready to gobble someone up.

"You caused His Imperial Majesty's demise! It must be you! Imperial Concubine Lin, you're certainly full of daring, His Imperial Majesty has been treating you well, and yet you assassinated Him! Haha, you want to destroy His Imperial Majesty and Ran'er, and Us? Do it, then. Even if you descend into hell, we will be together. You, on the other hand, will live out your life old and alone. Hahaha!"

The Empress let out a crazed laugh, and Her vermillion hairpins fell to the ground, causing Her hair to be in disarray like a madwoman.

She had always known that Imperial Concubine Lin loved His Imperial Majesty, just as much as the Empress herself loved Him. But She never thought that hatred would grow from that love and

that Imperial Concubine Lin would end up assassinating His Imperial Majesty.

Imperial Concubine Lin's eyes darkened, a cold smile hung on her face, "You think I would fulfill Your wishes? Never! I'm not letting You die, so You can never be together! All of you! Make sure to beat her ruthlessly, I'm sure that the feeling of beating up an Empress will be quite enjoyable!"

After she had finished, the court eunuchs and palace maidens rubbed their hands gleefully, walked forward.

These were all Imperial Concubine Lin's lackeys, whatever she says, goes. Seeing as the Empress was now incapacitated, Black Tortoise Country pretty much belonged to Imperial Concubine Lin, and seeing as Imperial Concubine Lin had painted the Sixth Prince as the criminal who assassinated His Imperial Majesty, even the Xia family would not have very much to say.

In this instance, would anyone pity the Empress' suffering?

Not to mention the fact that beating up the high and mighty Empress would be a very enjoyable feeling!

Chapter 251: The Xia Family Arrives (11)

"All of you..."

Staring at the people slowly advancing towards her, the Empress gritted her teeth hatefully, even though she still had some strength, the guards restrained her. She simply could not move. All she could do was glare at the advancing court eunuchs and palace maidens with her sharp, stern eyes.

Seeing this, the court eunuchs and palace maidens were stunned for a moment, until they remembered that the Empress was now a prisoner and gathered up their courage, continuing to approach Her.

Pa!

A palace maiden's hand landed on the Empress' face, five red shadows immediately appeared on Her fair face and the Empress gasped in pain.

Everyone else was instantly excited and rushed forward to punch and slap the Empress' body. They had never seen the high and mighty Empress in such a pathetic state. Their eyes lit up with glee.

It hurts!

The Empress now felt extreme pain from head to toe, as if even Her bones had all been broken, she licked the blood on the corner of her blood stained lips and swept a piercing glare across the rest and onto Concubine Lin.

"How does it feel, Empress? Not too bad, right? A high ranking person like You, would actually look so pathetic? Oh, that's right, I wonder how Pang Ran is doing, probably locked in the dungeon, awaiting his death. Of course, If You wanted to see him, I could make it happen. What do you think?"

Upon hearing her words, the Empress, who was initially still full

of rage, felt Her heart sink, "Can you really arrange for Us to see Ran'er?"

"I always mean what I say," Imperial Concubine Lin raised her arrogant chin, smiling frostily at the woman who was crawling on the ground. She had dreamt of fiercely stepping on Her countless times and tearing Her noble and virtuous face to pieces, "as long as You kneel before me, I won't only let You see Your son, if I'm feeling happy about it, I might even let him live for a few more months."

The Empress clenched Her fist and took a deep breath.

She knew that Imperial Concubine Lin's words could not be trusted, but when She thought of how much she wanted to see Her son, Imperial Concubine Lin was Her only hope.

For this one and only hope, for Ran'er, so what if We have to suffer the humiliation? We don't care!

"Imperial Concubine Lin, We hope that you will remember your words. As long as We kneel before you, you will arrange for me to meet with Ran'er."

She slowly closed her eyes, the eyelashes on her pale face trembled. Moments later, the Empress opened her eyes and gingerly knelt before Imperial Concubine Lin, in front of the eyes of the court eunuchs and palace maidens...

What humiliation! An endless sense of shame fill the Empress' heart, But what can We do? As long as We can see Ran'er, even if she asked Us to die, We would not hesitate, much less kneel before her. This was a tiny sliver of hope...

Such is the heart of a mother, no matter the circumstances, her heart would only long for her son.

At this moment, she was no longer a high and mighty Empress, but a mother who held her son in her heart...

"Imperial Concubine Lin, We have done as you've asked. Can you

bring Us to see Ran'er?"

The Empress' voice shook, Her long fingernails dug into Her palms, fresh blood began oozing out.

Suddenly, Imperial Concubine Lin laughed loudly, she laughed so hard that she was on the brink of tears.

"Haha, Empress, even You would encounter a day like this! All these years, it has always been I who had to kneel before You, it was always I would have had to greet You with respect, and You have done whatever You pleased with His Imperial Majesty's pampering! But now, You would have such a day like this! To kneel before me, accepting such a compromise! Did You really think that I would let You see that good-for-nothing Pang Ran? I tell you now, that I want Your family of three divided! Furthermore, once You're all dead, Your ashes will be separated from each other into the far corners of the earth, so You will never meet for eternity!"

Chapter 252: The Xia Family Arrives (12)

Imperial Concubine Lin's heart was overjoyed, her laughter grew louder and louder, filling the halls of the Soaring Phoenix Palace.

How should we say this? Too much pleasure can easily bring great sadness, and this was exactly what happened to Imperial Concubine Lin.

Just before her laughter died down, a loud roar could be heard from the distant horizon, frightening her until even her soul was trembling in fear. Before she could even react, a large snow-white figure smashed through the strong walls of the Soaring Phoenix Palace, its wolf claws flung across her face before she could even wipe the grin off her face, fiercely slapping her across the room.

Pa!

Imperial Concubine Lin's body crashed into a wall, she certainly did not have as much strength as Baobao to smash through the wall but thanks to the immense force that came from Baobao's slap, she had actually made a dent with her delicate body embedded in it, hitting her entire body.

"Imperial concubine!"

The guards were pale with shock, ready to dash forward and help the woman. At that moment, an eerie gaze fell on them.

"Grr!"

Baobao growled softly, charging forward, scaring everyone senseless. No one bothered about Imperial Concubine Lin anymore and immediately ran for their lives faster than lightning.

The Empress' face was completely blank, still in a daze from everything that had happened...

However, Baobao was far too lazy to chase after them. After all, the meat on them was dirty and smelly, not tasty at all.

It stepped forward, proudly walking towards Imperial Concubine Lin before biting her thigh and dragging her along with him. After a bit of consideration, Baobao turned its head towards the Empress and growled softly, as if hinting for Her to follow it...

Although the Empress' head was still dizzy from shock, She ended up following Baobao anyway. She did not know why, but She felt that the spiritual beast would never harm her.

...

Pang Ran could immediately see Pang Zihuang lying on the imperial bedchamber. He hurriedly threw himself towards him. Coincidentally, Pang Zihuang was slowly awakening from his sleep. Upon opening His eyes, He could vaguely make out a blurry figure rushing towards Him – His expression changed quickly at the sight of it.

He had not forgotten that He only just met with Concubine Lin, and the woman had tried to poison Him to death.

Could it be that the poison did not work, and did not kill Us at all?

Pang Zihuang then raised His leg into a kick, sending the figure that was rushing towards Him flying and loudly yelled, "Guards! Arrest this assassin!"

Pang Ran, who had no idea what was going on, ended up falling buttocks-first onto a cactus. He yelled in pain like a pig being slaughtered, his eyes filled with resentment.

What did I do this time? Suddenly receiving such a harsh kick, what could I have possibly done in my past life that was so disastrous that I should receive such harsh punishment? What a tragedy!

"Where is the assassin?"

The General, who arrived slightly later than Pang Ran, was initially overjoyed upon hearing Pang Zihuang's voice from outside

the Imperial bedchambers, but upon hearing his words a little clearer was then filled with rage. He immediately rushed in with his soldiers, "Your Imperial Majesty, Your humble servant has come to your aid too late! Where is this assassin?"

Although Lin Yu had been reprimanded, he certainly didn't expect for him to have even more accomplices who go as far as to harm His Imperial Majesty right in front of his eyes.

Such boldness!

However, once he entered the palace halls, he was shocked.

What did he see?

Pang Zihuang looking enraged and ready to kill, and the person he was facing was his most precious son and prince, sitting on the floor and covering his buttocks sadly, and a pure, honest and delicate young lady standing on one side of the room, with the corners of her lips tilting upwards into a grin, both hands on her chest. It wasn't hard to tell that her delicate and pretty face looked as if she were enjoying a good joke.

Chapter 253: The Xia Family Arrives (13)

What's going on? Wasn't there an assassin in the room? Where did the assassin go?

"Erm..." the General asked in confusion, "Your Imperial Majesty, where is this assassin?"

"The assassin? Why he's right... Eh? Pang Ran? What are you doing here?"

Pang Zihuang widened His eyes, shouldn't the Lin Yu siblings be here? Why is this kid, Pang Ran here?

Actually, Pang Zihuang cannot be blamed for having mistaken Pang Ran for somebody else. After all, He had only just woken up and His eyesight had not returned. He did not even see Pang Ran coming. All He saw was a figure rushing towards Him, and Pang Ran's figure was quite similar to that of Lin Yu's. So He naturally thought that the former was the latter. Because He had identified the man as Lin Yu, poor Pang Ran received the kick in Lin Yu's place.

"It would seem that You Imperial Majesty's vigor has returned quite well."

Gu Ruoyun smiled gently while stroking her chin, "That one kick has sent Pang Ran flying towards a distance of about 3.3 meters."

"Hehe."

Pang Zihuang felt slightly embarrassed, only understanding what had happened after Gu Ruoyun's explanation. The assassin We had seen was actually Pang Ran by mistake? But then again, it was the kid's fault for charging towards Us for no apparent reason. If it weren't for him, We would not have embarrassed ourselves in front of so many people.

The more He thought of it, the more the notion made sense to Him. Pang Zihuang glared sharply at Pang Ran, frightening him

into shrinking his neck, massaging his buttocks in grief.

What did I do this time? Pang Ran wondered.

"Oh right!"

Pang Zihuang smacked his palm on the bed, and bellowed angrily, "General, take the scoundrels Lin Yu and Imperial Concubine Lin into custody and bring them before Us, immediately!"

"Your Imperial Majesty."

The General glanced briefly at Gu Ruoyun, then bowed before Pang Zihuang and said, "Lin Yu has already been defeated by this young lady. As for Imperial Concubine Lin, she is now in the Soaring Phoenix Palace. Lady Gu has already sent her spiritual beast after her."

Then, the General began relaying the events that had happened after Pang Zihuang was poisoned in detail. Upon finding out that the siblings had tried to frame Pang Ran, Pang Zihuang was furious. He raised His sword and rushed out, forgetting to even put on His dragon robes. Everyone who saw Pang Zihuang in this state was dumbfounded and still in a daze even after He had left.

The end for Lin Yu will truly be miserable to an extreme point! You can imagine how terrifying an enraged Pang Zihuang would be!

As for Imperial Concubine Lin, once she had heard that Gu Ruoyun was truly the Master of Hundred Herb Hall, she screamed and fainted immediately, the hatred in her heart nearly swallowing her whole.

The Empress had absolutely no idea over what was going on from the very beginning. However, once She saw Pang Zihuang and Pang Ran safe and sound, She sighed in relief, and tears filled Her eyes, unloading Her poise and grandeur. After all, once you removed the layers of Her position as the Empress, She was truly a

gentle and virtuous loving wife and mother.

Upon knowing that it was Gu Ruoyun who saved Pang Zihuang, She held her hand in such gratitude that She could not let go. It was a good thing that Pang Ran pulled his Imperial Mother away, otherwise, She would have been holding Gu Ruoyun's hand the entire day.

However, the powers of the Imperial Palace should never be underestimated, the ingredients for the antidote to Pang Zihuang's trigonotis peduncularis poisoning were gathered within half a day. With the ingredients, Gu Ruoyun can begin to concoct the antidote for Pang Zihuang. Nevertheless, Gu Ruoyun found it strange that despite the huge commotion that had happened in the palace, none of its details leaked out, as if someone had arranged to confine all information...

...

A fresh breeze could be felt, and a mysterious man in black stayed hidden behind a tree, his palms pressing against the back of the tree. His cold, unfeeling eyes glowed with the light of warmth and love upon seeing the young girl in the courtyard. His thin, water chestnut-shaped lips lightly curled upwards, and the face concealed beneath his black mask displayed a kind of tenderness that no one else has ever seen.

It would seem that this cold man who had a powerful aura would only be enveloped in the luster of such affection in moments like this.

Chapter 254: The Xia Family Arrives (14)

"If you wanted to protect her so much, why not show yourself to her, instead of always hiding in the shadows?"

Zuo Shangchen, dressed in peach pink robes suddenly appeared behind the man. His face, which was as beautiful as a peach blossom, carried a relaxed and capricious smile. His beautiful eyes carelessly glanced at the body of the man before him. No one had noticed it, but at that moment a strange light flashed across his eyes.

Once he had found out that two parties from the Xia family were looking to track Gu Ruoyun down, the man in black called upon Zuo Shangchen for his help to squash the news of her presence in Black Tortoise Country.

This is why no news regarding the recent events at the Imperial Palace had leaked out...

Aside from anyone who was involved in the situation, no one knew the whereabouts of the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall.

"Xiao Yun'er...must really want to see you."

Zuo Shangchen closed his fan and wiped off his lazy smile. His eyes now stared seriously at the man, "No one knows how much pain and suffering she's endured all these years, are you really decided on never revealing yourself?"

The man was silent. The sunlight could not drive out the chill emanating from his cold demeanor, no matter how warm it was.

At that moment, even Zuo Shangchen could feel the man's depressive state, his chest felt blocked with panic, his usually frivolous expression was now more dignified – no one had ever seen him this way.

"You..."

"It is still not the time yet." The man said, shaking his head as a cold light flashed across his dark eyes, "I cannot let anyone know of my presence here, and no one must realize that the man locked within the mountains is not me! Otherwise, the men who have eyed me covetously would not let this opportunity slip by. Furthermore, with such a strong enemy on my back, before I am powerful enough, I can only use this method to ensure her safety."

Zuo Shangchen was momentarily startled, then recovered himself to his usual easy-going yet enchanting smile, his red lips curved attractively. He unfolded his fan with a smile as beautiful as ten miles of fragrant peach blossoms.

"You're willing to give your all in order to protect her, then I will use my life to ensure her safety in the future. If anything happens to you, I will never let anyone harm even a single strand of hair on her head."

Zuo Shangchen may have said this with a smile, but his eyes displayed exceptional firmness.

No one could even touch a single hair on whomever Zuo Shangchen resolves to protect.

Unless they did it over his dead body!

"Thank you."

The man replied hoarsely.

What is the meaning of being a brother? Brothers will make every effort to protect the members of their family. While he has never mentioned this to Zuo Shangchen, this man would be his sworn brother for the rest of his life!

"In the past, it was you who saved my life. If it were not for you, I would not be alive today. So protecting her is my duty." Zuo Shangchen replied seriously.

Hearing these words, the man said nothing more. His gaze fell on the pure and beautiful young girl in the courtyard. His eye so filled

with love it could drown a person to death.

"Yun'er, do not worry. Once I've accumulated enough power to protect you, I will appear before you, and guard you so that you will always live in peace."

...

If Gu Ruoyun had known that the news of the commotion in the palace was squashed by that mischievous Zuo Shangchen, she would have punched him fiercely! In fact, the reason why she had decided to make such a huge commotion in Black Tortoise Country was to attract the attention of the Xia family. But their good intentions put her efforts to waste.

At this moment, in the Xia household, a middle-aged man slammed his hand on a table, glaring coldly at his subordinates, "I gave you a simple order to find someone, and you've failed! If that little bastard Xia Linyu found her first, all of you had better feed yourselves to tigers and wolves! I'll give you half a month more. Be sure to murder Gu Ruoyun, and push the blame on Xia Linyu! I want to cause a rift between Xian Linyu's father and the Ghost Doctor!"

Chapter 255: The Xia Family Arrives (15)

"Reporting to the Second Master, our men have already been to the Hundred Herb Hall in Azure Dragon Country. However... It seems that Gu Ruoyun was not in the Hundred Herb Hall." said a man who was drenched in cold sweat, trembling in fear while awaiting the middle-aged man's response.

Even though the Second Master had always put on a gentle and warm face, only they knew that this man was shady and cruel to the bone. Anyone who offended him would never live in peace!

A haze formed in Xia Qi's eyes, his lips curled eerily, "Xia Linyu, this time, no one can save you or your father! Even if your travels prove fruitful and you're successful in curing the tuberculosis in your body, it does not mean that your father would have the same good fortune! The Xia family... will sooner or later be mine! I will eradicate anything that stands in my way!"

...

In the restaurant, Gu Ruoyun stared at the evildoer who was fanning himself with a coquettish smile on his face before her and rubbed her temples as if she had a headache. This person was like the soul of a deceased who has yet to disperse. No matter where she went, she would always bump into him.

"What? No maids to carry you on your palanquin today?"

Every time this evildoer appeared he would always be lying lazily in his palanquin. Today, there were no palanquin maids in sight; it was truly a rare occurrence. Gu Ruoyun was indeed slightly astonished.

Zuo Shangchen smiled softly; his beautiful face displayed a joking smile, the corners of his lips lifted upwards to a smile that was utterly magnificent.

"I do need to move about sometimes, don't you agree, Xiao

Yun'er?"

Ever since this evildoer appeared, the entire restaurant went completely silent. Especially the unmarried women, they could not take their eyes off him. They had already thought that the Third Prince of Black Tortoise Country was beautiful enough, but they never imagined that a man could be so beautiful to this degree, his looks were simply capable of causing the downfall of a city.

Even his slightest smile could pull at anyone's heartstrings, so beautiful that he could turn living things upside down.

Pang Ran's eyes circulated between the two, unsure of what to think, only his gossipy glances betrayed him.

"May this prince sit down?" Zuo Shangchen's lips curved into a shallow smile, his beautiful eyes fixed upon Gu Ruoyun from the very beginning.

"Sit. Please sit. Sit anywhere you like."

Before waiting for Gu Ruoyun to speak, Pang Ran hurriedly stood up, his face brimming with a wide smile, "The Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country has graced us with his presence, and is certainly a welcomed a guest of Black Tortoise Country, don't you agree, goddess?"

Obviously, Pang Ran had already recognized Zuo Shangchen's identity from the start.

What? The Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country?

The eyes of the women who had previously been hesitating lit up, for some of them were daughters of Imperial officials. Their ranks dictate that they can never marry commoners. No matter how beautiful the man was, he would not be able to match up to them if he did not have any rank or social status.

However, this was entirely different if he were the Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country.

As long as you could become the wife or concubine of the Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country, then your family name would certainly rise as a result. Moreover, this was a man of exceptional beauty.

Hence, some of the girls stood up and walked straight towards Zuo Shangchen. They simply could not wait any longer.

A girl dressed in white, like a pure and flawless lotus flower, shyly lowered her head, her voice as sweet as melodious as an oriole bird and said, "Your Royal Highness the Fourth Prince, this humble girl is the daughter of the Prime Minister of Black Tortoise Country, Xiang'er. I did not expect to bump into the Fourth Prince's elegant demeanor. If Your Royal Highness doesn't mind, may this humble girl sit with you?"

Eyeing the scene before her, Gu Ruoyun contentedly raised her teacup, leisurely watching the show from the sides. Her beautiful clear eyes were like a smile, but not yet a smile.

Chapter 256: The Xia Family Arrives (16)

Zuo Shangchen's lips held a touch of a smile, his indolent manner wrapped around the back of his head, his beautiful eyes shot a glance at the blushing Xiang'er, and lazily opened his mouth, "This prince enjoys taking up two seats for himself."

What he really meant was, he wanted to take up two seats in a table for four, and there was no space for her now.

Unfortunately, Xiang'er did not understand what Zuo Shangchen had meant. She observed the smile on the man before her, thinking that he had a good impression on her, and her heart began beating happily. Her eyes shot a glance at Gu Ruoyun who was seated next to Pang Ran and said, "Excuse me, miss. May I have a seat? I am the daughter of the Prime Minister. If you would give me your seat, I will give you as much gold as you want!"

She thought that the plainly dressed woman who came with Pang Ran must certainly be the kind of woman who has sold herself in order to curry favor with influential officials. Such a disgusting woman simply isn't fit to sit with me! She thought. If it were not for the sake of maintaining a good impression on the Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country, she would have ordered someone to kick her out long ago!

As for the reason behind Zuo Shangchen's visit, she believed that it was because of Pang Ran, seeing as he was the Sixth Prince of Black Tortoise Country, having some form of acquaintance with Zuo Shangchen would make sense.

Gu Ruoyun tapped her finger, her pure and delicate face filled with a smile, "It's not that I won't let you have my seat, but the price of it is quite high."

"Name your price. I will pay it."

A scornful glint flashed across Xiang'er's expression. I was right,

she thought, this woman has no shame, she would sell her body for a small benefit.

Ironically, Xiang'er had completely forgotten that she herself had approached them after hearing about Zuo Shangchen's identity. If Zuo Shangchen were not the Fourth Prince of Vermillion Bird Country, she would have arrogantly decided that the latter was not fit to even speak to her.

"As long as you can pay the price, I will sell this seat to you." Gu Ruoyun put down her teacup, her clear, beautiful, smiling eyes observed Xiang'er's disdainful expression, she nodded her head and said, "The price of this seat, is a country! If you can present me with a country as a gift, then I will sell it to you. This is still considered as friendship price, otherwise, I would not sell it to you for even one hundred countries."

"You..."

Xiang'er's expression changed greatly. The nerve of this woman, she thought angrily, opening her mouth to ask for a whole country, this is considered friendship price? Friendship my little sister!

"Miss, you've treated me in such a way, despite my good intentions." Taking a deep breath, Xiang'er clenched her hand into a fist. Her snow-white complexion exhibiting clear fury, "Are you not sitting with His Royal Highness, Pang Ran, the Sixth Prince of our Black Tortoise Country for the purpose of obtaining glory, splendor, wealth, and rank? Why pretend to be noble and virtuous in front of everyone? I will give you one thousand pieces of gold, now give this seat to me! You'll never earn so much money in your life if you do not rely on the Sixth Prince."

This woman is such a fake! Xiang'er thought. If she were not a woman who coveted riches, she would never have taken a fancy to a good-for-nothing like Pang Ran! At the end of the day, Pang Ran is the Emperor's favorite, so if she could become the Sixth Prince's

wife, wouldn't she be enjoying endless splendor and riches?

It seems that I would have to speak to my father about this. A cunning and unlawful woman is scheming on getting close to the Sixth Prince. Let father remind His Imperial Majesty, lest the naturally naïve Sixth Prince be discarded in circles around a woman with such intentions.

However, upon Jin Xiang'er's words, the faces of the two men turned ugly.

Pang Ran angrily slammed his hand on the table, his eyes spitting with rage. Gu Ruoyun was a great benefactor to him, and he would never allow anyone to insult her innocence.

Chapter 257: The First Clash (1)

"Get out!"

At that moment, a sombre voice was heard from the side.

The smile that was as beautiful as peach blossoms on Zuo Shangchen's exquisitely stunning face had disappeared into thin air; his easy-going demeanor was gone, and on the corners of his lips was a chilling smile. His cold eyes swept across Jin Xiang'er's face, his gaze was as if he were looking at a piece of trash.

"Were you listening? The Fourth Prince has asked you to get lost! Get out now!"

At this time, Jin Xiang'er was not even looking at Zuo Shangchen, so she was not aware that the latter was actually referring to her. Instead, she thought that he was asking Gu Ruoyun to leave and stared at her disdainfully.

However, Gu Ruoyun, whose lips had always held a faint smile from the start, did not leave her seat. This made Jin Xiang'er even angrier. I have never seen such a shameless woman! She still remains nonchalant despite being chased away by the Fourth Prince!

"Hey, did you not hear what I've said? Get out of here immediately! I've never seen such a shameless woman like you! As a woman, you should at least know a bit of restraint."

Jin Xiang'er looked at Gu Ruoyun with loathing as her beautiful eyes filled with disdain. What a brazen woman! She thought. She's probably refusing to leave because she's taken a fancy to the Fourth Prince! Unfortunately, without a reputable family, it's impossible to become an imperial wife! I am the daughter of the Prime Minister of Black Tortoise Country, certainly a good match for the grand Fourth Prince.

"Daughter of the Prime Minister of Black Tortoise Country, Jin

Xiang'er?"

A soft, cold laugh could be heard. The man chuckled the chin of the woman in white with his fan, his red lips curled upwards coldly, his expressionless eyes did not contain a single shred of warmth, it was as if she was looking at a dead man.

Gu Ruoyun shook her head, let out an exasperated sigh and thought, there are so many unobservant people in this world.

"Four... Fourth Prince."

Jin Xiang'er foolishly stared at the evildoer's face, unable to keep herself from staring so brazenly. She had never seen such a beautiful man. If I were to marry him, I would be satisfied for the rest of my life, she thought.

"You like me, yes?" Zuo Shangchen asked, his eyes slightly squinted, a sliver of cold light passed through his eyes. His lips curved into a ghastly and terrifying smile as if still containing a faint bit of rage.

"Ye- Yes."

Jin Xiang'er nodded her head, replying with starry-eyed infatuation, "Fourth Prince, Xiang'er has adored you from the first moment she laid eyes on you. Even if Xiang'er cannot be the wife of the Fourth Prince, she is willing to stay by the Fourth Prince's side to serve you."

"Serve me?"

Zuo Shangchen smiled dazzlingly, and Jin Xiang'er's eyes couldn't help but fall into its brilliance.

Just when she was about to take a step further, the man's disdainful voice spoke into her ear, her body was momentarily transported into an icebox.

"Are you worthy?"

Are you worthy?

Jin Xiang'er's face turned pale, and widened her beautiful eyes in astonishment, in that instant, she really believed that everything she had heard was an entire misconception.

She did not ask to be his wife, only to be by his side would be good enough, even though she would be nameless and without rank.

But what did he say? She wondered.

"This face is indeed lovely and moving, undoubtedly deserving the title of the prettiest maiden in Black Tortoise Country, unfortunately..." Zuo Shangchen closed his fan, curving his lips into a smile, "Unfortunately much too shameless! Are all the women in Black Tortoise Country without shame? Willing to strip naked and deliver herself to the door of the first man she sees? To follow this prince without requesting any form of status? Do you think this prince's IQ is lacking? Your willingness to hit on me proves that your mind is not pure, yet you still insist on masquerading your purity in front of me! Apologies, even if you wanted to become my scullery maid, I simply do not approve."

Chapter 258: The First Clash (2)

Jin Xiang'er's delicate frame shivered slightly, she tightly bit her pale white lips, staring in resentment at the beautiful, peach blossom-like face.

Any man would have tender, protective feelings towards the fairer sex, right? But this man actually humiliated me with those words! Even saying that I would not be fit to become his scullery maid!

Actually, humiliating her was not Zuo Shangchen's only intention, he was speaking the truth! Even the mere toilet cleaners in the Dark Yin Palace were one of the very best masters in all of the four countries, what more the scullery maids! This woman was indeed beautiful, but her heart was not pure and her powers were much too weak, even a job as a toilet cleaner would not be given to her!

"You are mistaken, Fourth Prince," said Pang Ran, his face beaming with a smile. "Most of the women in our Black Tortoise Country are more reserved and proud, women like her are in the minority, they are a disgrace to our country. It's as if they have not seen a man in many lifetimes so every time they see one, they rush towards him."

Great!

At this very moment, Pang Ran felt absolutely great!

The Prime Minister's family has always been Imperial Concubine Lin's accomplices, and he had never liked Jin Xiang'er for a very long time, but could never find any opportunity to eliminate the Prime Minister.

"Oh?" Zuo Shangchen raised an eyebrow, almost smiling but not quite, "Then this prince must look at his calendar before I leave the house, in case I should be so unfortunate to meet a woman like

this! Such wretched luck."

Jin Xiang'er felt her heart break, I had never imagined that the Fourth Prince had such an impression on me! Even saying that meeting me was his wretched luck! I am still the daughter of the Prime Minister! To become the Fourth Prince's Concubine would be more than enough, what more accompanying him!

That's right! It must be the fault of that woman! If it were not for her, the Fourth Prince would not treat me so poorly!

Upon that thought, Jin Xiang'er's hateful eyes swept towards Gu Ruoyun, her gaze was like a knife, ready to cut her body into pieces. Finally, she could only grit her teeth and fight back the tears in her eyes as she turned towards Zuo Shangchen made a small bow, "Your Royal Highness, the Fourth Prince. This time it was this humble girl who has acted too recklessly, but this humble girl is certainly not a careless person, my intention of asking to sit with the Fourth Prince today was merely to adore the Fourth Prince's magnificence. Please forgive this humble girl for causing a disturbance, I will now take my leave."

Finishing her speech, she hurriedly walked towards the door. But just as she was about to make her exit, an ill wind suddenly rose behind her as if a hand had landed fiercely on her back. Her body was immediately flung a few meters forward and she spat out a mouthful of blood, landing on a Camphor tree in front of her. The sound of sneering laughter could be heard in the background.

Zuo Shangchen put his hand down, as if nothing had happened, and said carelessly, "She's quite lucky, this prince is in a rather good mood today, so she only received a lesson. But if I were to be in a horrible mood..."

Then her blood will be spilled all over the floor!

How could the person who had single-handedly raised the Dark Yin Palace be a softhearted man? He had always based his decisions on killing a person on his moods.

"Xiao Yun'er, we have not met in so long, how about... Giving me a hug?"

Wiping away his hazy expression, Zuo Shangchen smiled again. His smile was as beautiful as a flower, stunning everyone else in a split second.

Sadly, after seeing how much suffering Jin Xiang'er had to endure, no matter how infatuated they were, no one dared to hit on him this time...

Chapter 259: The First Clash (3)

Amidst the noise in the restaurant, Gu Ruoyun suddenly felt a sinister gaze staring straight at her. She frowned and turned towards the direction of the gaze. However, the stare that she had felt was nowhere to be found in the crowd.

Unless she was mistaken?

Gu Ruoyun shook her head, and retracted her vision, lightly relishing her tea, yet her senses were investigating all the movements around her...

At that moment, no one had realized that a man dressed in black hid inside the restaurant's upper compartments, fixing his eyes maliciously on Guo Ruoyun who was talking cheerily and wittily to Zuo Shangchen. He clenched his fist tightly, suppressing his murderous intent.

He never thought that the sky would have turned upside down during his short time away from Black Tortoise Country! The Hundred Herb Hall? So what? He thought. Even if this woman was as thick as thieves with the Hundred Herb hall, he would not let her live a moment longer.

Whether it's her or Pang Ran, both of them must die!

"Imperial Concubine mother, uncle, your Imperial son will find a way to avenge you! I will not let you die tragically in the hands of such vile people."

Hatred.

How could I not feel hatred?

No matter how much excellence he displayed all these years, only Pang Ran had a place in his Imperial Father's heart. I am many times more superior to Pang Ran, why does Imperial Father not recognize my hard work? He thought spitefully. Even my Imperial Concubine mother could not obtain a place in my Imperial Father's

heart!

That man's love was completely dominated by the pair of mother and son!

I now depend on my own hard work to catch the attention of the Xia family, if I were to become Emperor, then I will determine the life and death of this mother and son! By then, I can unleash a foul vengeance in my Imperial Concubine mother's stead!

However, my Imperial Concubine mother is now dead! And all because of her most beloved man! She loved my Imperial Father so much, how could she have possibly conspired with Uncle? This must all be a ploy by Pang Ran and his mother!

Of course, the Hundred Herb Hall cannot be separated from this affair.

"Gu Ruoyun, I seem to have heard that the Second Master of the Xia family is looking for her whereabouts! If I can sell the information regarding her presence in Black Tortoise Country to Xia Qi, I might be able to utilize the forces of the Xia family to eliminate her!"

Anyone who has helped Pang Ran and his mother must die!

"Pang Ran, Gu Ruoyun, and that so-called Empress, I will never forgive you for what you've done! Moreover, sooner or later, Black Tortoise Country will belong to me!" Pang Fei gritted his teeth fiercely, his eyes staring icily at the three people in front of him, his lips, hidden by his black mask, curved into a sinister grin.

...

At the restaurant's lounge.

Pang Ran was trying his best to curry favor with Zuo Shangchen and Gu Ruoyun, when suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he saw, to his astonishment, a man in black robes passing by next to him. Pang Ran quickly raised his eyebrows.

"What's wrong, Pang Ran?" Gu Ruoyun asked, noticing Pang Ran's strange behavior.

"Goddess, I keep having this feeling that this man resembles my Third Imperial Brother quite a bit from behind."

It couldn't be. With Third Imperial Brother's current status, he wouldn't dare to come swaggering in here. Perhaps I was wrong.

Pang Ran shook his head at the thought, "Perhaps I am overthinking things, ever since Imperial Concubine Lin's incident, my Third Imperial Brother has mysteriously disappeared. Imperial Father has already sent out search parties to find his whereabouts, but no one could find him. He wouldn't possibly appear in Black Tortoise Country in a time like this, especially since the punishment for Imperial Concubine Lin's regicide is to execute the entire family up to the third generation."

Gu Ruoyun said nothing, only staring frostily with her beautiful, clear eyes at the disappearing black robe in front of her; a cold light flew across her eyes.

If her intuition was right, the sinister gaze that she had felt a while ago came from that man...

Chapter 260: The First Clash (4)

Heaven City, the holy land in the hearts of the people of Black Tortoise Country, ultimately dominating the fate of the entire country. As governors of Heaven City, the Xia family was equivalent to spiritual deities to everyone else.

It is said that the Master of the Xia Family has reached the level of a Martial Emperor. In fact, anyone who has attained the level of a Martial General would be considered as a powerful cultivator in all four countries. Once reaching the rank of Martial King, the person could receive vassals and be considered as a marquis, regardless of his or her gender. So you can imagine the level of prestige a Martial Emperor would receive in the eyes of the world.

At this moment, the Xia house was a complete mess, not because of him, but because the Young Master of the Xia family has suddenly fallen ill again. The Xia household courtyard rang with the sounds of his agonized wails, it was as if the Xia family was enveloped in a dark cloud. The Master of the Xia family wanted to die from grief, and looked as if he had grown many years older in a split second.

However, while everyone was worrying about the Young Master's illness, only the Second Master looked as if he took joy in the calamity.

"Hmph! Xia Jixi, your illness has already worsened to such a condition, staying alive would be such agony, why not die soon and be done with it! Instead, you're wasting the Xia family resources!" Every time Xia Qi heard the agonized screams from the courtyard, his face would grow red from excitement. To him, the more Xia Jixi suffers, the more thrill he felt.

Suddenly, a guard hurriedly walked in, falling on his knees into a bow, exclaiming in a congratulatory manner, "Second Master, the Third Prince of Black Tortoise Country has arrived in Heaven City

to request an audience."

"The Third Prince of Black Tortoise Country?"

Xia Qi furrowed his brows, and impatiently replied, "Denied!"

"But Second Master, he says he has news of Gu Ruoyun."

Gu Ruoyun?

Xia Qi's eyes froze, a shadow flashed across his eyes. He grew silent, after a long while, he said, "Take this token and bring the Third Prince to me. Remember, everything must be done in absolute discretion, you mustn't let anyone see you!"

"Yes, Second Master!"

The guard retreated immediately after his answer.

Xia Qi squinted his eyes, observing the disappearing guard, and smiled coldly, "Xia Linyu, looks like I've found Gu Ruoyun first! Don't worry. Once I've murdered her, I'll definitely place the blame on your head. Then, your useless father will die for sure! Once he's dead, it'll be your turn, you little bastard! And then you, my dearest father, did you not love the pair of father and son the most? So I'll let you see your own child die before you, so you'll know the pain of losing them! Maybe then you'll regret your decision in not granting me possession of the Xia family!"

I was forced to do everything that I've done! If Father had appointed me as the Master of the Xia family, this would not have happened. If it were not for this, I would certainly have been kind and loving towards my elder brother.

At that very moment, the guard escorted a black-robed Pang Fei into the room. Upon seeing Xia Qi on his seat, Pang Fei bent forward into a bow, "Greetings, noble son of Xia." He greeted.

"You know the whereabouts of Gu Ruoyun?" Xia Qi hid the chilliness on his face, smiling gently like a fresh spring breeze at the man in black before him.

When in front of people, he was always very good at concealing his emotions for the sake of his own reputation.

"Putong!"

Suddenly, Pang Fei kneeled to the ground, his voice cracking through his tears, and cried heart-breakingly, " Noble Sir Xia, you have to make a decision for the sake of Black Tortoise Country! My Imperial Concubine mother and uncle have served the Imperial Household and Xia family faithfully. Yet, Her Imperial Majesty the Empress is full of wild schemes. She has hatched a secret plan to help that good-for-nothing Pang Ran take over the Imperial Throne, furthermore leaving the control of the Xia family. Just when my Imperial Concubine mother found out about the scheme, the Empress poisoned His Imperial Majesty without hesitation to frame my Imperial Concubine mother! In the end, she's even managed to gang up with Gu Ruoyun of the Hundred Herb Hall, her rapacious designs are well-known by everyone. Please, noble sir Xia, help us eradicate this tumor from the Imperial Household!"

Chapter 261: The First Clash (5)

Pang Fei exposed his appearance, painting Imperial Concubine Lin as a completely innocent woman, and the Empress and Pang Ran the ones with the wildest schemes in all the realms who even conspired with outsiders and did not place the dignity of the Xia family in their eyes.

Xia Qi's eyes went cold, but quickly returned to normal and said, "What boldness from the Empress and Pang Ran! My Xia family has always determined the line of succession of the Imperial Throne in Black Tortoise Country! When was it theirs to decide? You may take your leave, Third Prince. I will send my men to the Imperial Palace and uphold justice in your name."

"Thank you very much, noble Sir Xia, then I will take my leave."

Xia Qi lightly nodded his head, then suddenly remembered something, and said, "Oh, that's right. I've heard that many Imperial princes of Black Tortoise Country have died. Aside from you, there is only the Fifth and Sixth Prince left. The Fifth Prince has a penchant for prostitutes and is unable to take the responsibility of the public. The Sixth Prince, Pang Ran, is a good-for-nothing. If good-for-nothings like these can rise to become emperors, then beggars can also become gods. The Xia family has no use for good-for-nothings, hence, you shall be the successor to the Imperial Throne of Black Tortoise Country."

Pang Fei stopped in his tracks, he did not feel confident enough to look at Xia Qi.

What did Xia Qi say? That I would be the next Emperor of Black Tortoise Country? Is this true?

"Noble Sir Xia, are you saying..."

"Return home and await the news." Xia Qi said with a smile, "My father is currently in a confused and disoriented state as he is

preoccupied with matters concerning my elder brother. He not in the right state of mind to worry about such matters. I merely want to lift some of the burdens from his shoulders, I can make the decisions in matters like this."

The surprise was too sudden, Pang Fei's heart nearly stopped beating. He woke up from his daze a few moments later and felt a burst of ecstasy. He was so excited that he wanted to laugh wildly.

Imperial Concubine mother, uncle, did you see? Black Tortoise Country will indeed be mine! That good-for-nothing Pang Ran cannot contend with me! So what if he receives the love and pampering of my Imperial Father? He will never succeed the throne without the agreement of the Xia family!

You wait, Empress and Pang Ran! The day I become Emperor will be the day you descend into hell!

"Noble Sir Xia, I will be a great Emperor of Black Tortoise Country. I will not fail you."

"Mmm."

Xia Qi closed his eyes in exhaustion, "I am tired. You may go."

"Yes." Pang Fei replied and quickly left the Xia household courtyard.

After Pang Fei disappeared, Xia Qi opened his eyes. Where did the warmth that he had in his eyes disappear to? Filled with a deep cold, "That Pang Zihuang is much too stubborn, there's no way for him to become a suitable dog! In contrast, this Pang Fei can be easily controlled."

...

In the Xia household's solemn and peaceful private study, Master Xia, who was dressed in white robes, stared outside the window with his hands behind his back. He carried the air of a celestial being.

Only his face carried a sense of great change as he tiredly asked the man behind him, "Is there anything more?"

The Xia family chamberlain hesitated for a moment, and said, "Master, the Emperor of Black Tortoise Country has sent word. He wishes to recommend the Sixth Prince, Pang Ran to become the next monarch."

"Pang Ran?" Master Xia wrinkled his eyebrows, "Do you have any information regarding this... Pang Ran?"

"Your old servant has sent someone to investigate this, there is nothing good to report about his martial rank, and he can be thoroughly considered as a good-for-nothing. However, he does have some skill in national governance, there is no great need for a monarch to be physically powerful. But he must be capable of ruling his kingdom well, so that his people can live peacefully and contentedly and that the country prospers. This is what master has once told this humble servant. Your humble servant believes that Pang Ran is worthy, and that is why I would disturb you so boldly, Master."

"Furthermore..." The Xia family chamberlain bowed, "The Fifth Prince has also recommended for the Sixth Prince to succeed as the monarch, and is willing to stay on the sides and assist. The Fifth Prince's innate skill is rather good, with both of them united, they would have the potential to make Black Tortoise Country flourish."

Chapter 262: The First Clash (6)

Master Xia paused momentarily, then nodded his head, "Seeing how outstanding Pang Ran is, then you shall make the decision on this matter. If there is nothing more, you may retire. I am a little tired."

Hearing this, the Xia family chamberlain's face showed some hesitation, after a long consideration, he slowly opened his mouth, "Master, there is still one other thing, the Emperor of Black Tortoise Country, Pang Zihuang has sent a single Longevity Pill as a gift. Only Master has never accepted any gifts from anyone, so this old servant was very hesitant, I did not know if I should give this back to Pang Zihuang or..."

A pill!

Master Xia felt as if a heavy weight had struck through his heart and caused a ripple, he finally turned his head, his old eyes excitedly turned towards the chamberlain, "What did you say? A Longevity Pill?"

The Xia family chamberlain was momentarily stunned, ever since the Young Master's illness took a turn for the worse, he has never seen the Master react in such a way. Although the Longevity Pill was very valuable, but based on the Master's capabilities, purchasing a string of pills from the Hundred Herb Hall would not be a problem.

Did he need to be this excited?

However, the Xia family chamberlain realistically replied Master Xia's question, "In response to your question Master, the pill from Pang Zihuang is in this old servant's hands, this old servant shall present it to you."

The Xia family chamberlain then opened his palm, revealing a single green pill in his hand.

The pill was filled with the vitality of the life force, as if an endless life enveloped Master Xia's body, even the pores of his body felt refreshed.

Master Xia grew more excited and suddenly laughed.

Of course, he wasn't thrilled because of the pill, the most important thing here was that the Master of Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun had vanished without a trace, and no matter how hard the Xia family tried, they could not find out where she was, as if some other power was causing interference. Now, Pang Zihuang has presented him with the Longevity Pill, which was only available from the Hundred Herb Hall.

What does this mean?

One pill is priceless, and even if Pang Zihuang were to empty the entire contents of the imperial treasury, he would not have been able to purchase one. Unless he had recently met with the person with the most authority in the Hundred Herb Hall!

There is probably only one person who can actually make a decision regarding the pills from the Hundred Herb Hall!

"Chamberlain," Master Xia steadied the great waves in his heart, and said, "Get ready immediately, I want to make a personal visitation to the Imperial Palace of Black Tortoise Country!"

The Xia family chamberlain was astonished, as the person in control of Heaven City, the Master had great authority and does not need to personally handle matters surrounding the selection of the Crown Prince. Yet he was choosing to visit the palace when the Young Master is gravely ill?

Could this be because of the Longevity Pill?

"Yes, Master." The Xia family chamberlain replied, hiding his suspicions, and joining his fists into a respectful bow.

Then, out of his line of sight, Master Xia straightened the sleeves of his robe and walked quickly out of the study. His clear and

bright laughter resounded over the entire horizon, echoing around the Xia household courtyard.

Most people thought that their Master was cracking under the upsetting state of the Young Master's illness. Otherwise, why would he be laughing so loudly at a time like this?

But only Master Xia knew, once he found Gu Ruoyun, not only would he be able to complete Lord Lingxiao's mission, he might even be able to cure Xia Jixi's strange illness...

...

All was silent in the Imperial Court.

Pang Zihuang's majestic gaze swept across the statesman before him and steadily asked, "Beloved noble ministers, Concubine Lin and the Imperial Advisor are guilty of plotting a rebellion, but the Third Prince is innocent. However, due to the sins of his mother, this means that he cannot possibly be selected as the Crown Prince! Hence, We have already sent word to the Xia family, and recommended the Sixth Prince as the Crown Prince of Black Tortoise Country, do any of Our beloved noble ministers have any opinions?"

Chapter 263: The First Clash (7)

Opinions?

Do we dare have any opinions?

Imperial Concubine Lin has committed regicide, resulting in the Third Prince having narrowly missed the opportunity to become the Crown Prince. The Fifth Prince has given up on his right for the title, and would rather assist Pang Ran instead. Hence, based on the current state of affairs, only Pang Ran can take up the heavy responsibility of ruling Black Tortoise Country.

So, upon hearing Pang Zihuang's declaration, all the officials merely looked at each other, not one of them daring to oppose the proposition.

"Good. Then since there are no opinions from the noble officers, then We shall await the Xia family's decision!"

Pang Zihuang nodded His head in satisfaction, Pang Ran's behavior has been most satisfactory for this period of time – he has not gone out to make trouble. His innate skill may not be up to par, but this is not a big issue. As long as he had the capability to lead Black Tortoise Country towards a glorious path, that would be enough.

An Emperor does not need to have strong powers, but must be wise in making strategic decisions, and based on the trials during this period of time, the kid, Pang Ran has proven to have this power. This was why He chose to approach the Xia family and recommend him.

At this moment, a low laugh could be heard from the front of the room. It was cold and sinister, filled with insufferable arrogance.

"Hehe. Dearest Imperial Father, don't You think that Your decision was made a little...too sloppily?"

Outside the Imperial Court, a black robe was wrapped around the

man's body, the soft face of the man wearing it was cold and malicious, a smile hung on the corners of his lips, his sinister eyes glared sharply at Pang Zihuang, who was seated on the dragon throne.

When the black-robed man raised his head, that familiar face suddenly shone into His eyes, and Pang Zihuang's expression changed, "Pang Fei, how did you get here?"

"Hehe. If Your humble son were not here, then Imperial Father would have handed the magnificent Black Tortoise Country to a useless good-for-nothing?" Pang Fei smiled coldly, his already vicious eyes now full of hatred.

I hate Him, I hate His prejudice. I hate His heartlessness towards my Imperial Concubine mother! He thought. Unfortunately, this man is my Imperial Father!

Pang Zihuang's expression turned grave. "Pang Fei, your Imperial Concubine mother has committed a great crime, We chose not to implicate you in it as you were not involved. However, from now on, you will live as a commoner, no longer a prince of Black Tortoise Country!"

When all is said and done, He chooses to be merciful.

Even if Imperial Concubine Lin had committed a great sin, Pang Fei is innocent, and His flesh and blood. How could He possibly have the heart to kill him?

"Imperial Father, You know how much my Imperial Concubine mother loved you. How could she have killed You if she loved You so much?" Pang Fei smiled coldly "Anyone with clear-sighted eyes would know that it was the Empress and Pang Ran who framed my Imperial Concubine mother, and you showed favoritism towards Her! Does Your heart not trust my Imperial Concubine mother?"

"Impudence!"

Bang!

Pang Zihuang slammed his hand on the table, His expression was furious, "Imperial Concubine Lin confessed to inflicting harm upon Us herself, are you saying that Our words are false?"

"Whether it's true or false, I believe that You, Imperial Father, know it clearly in Your heart!" Pang Fei grit his teeth and clenched his fist tightly, he took a deep breath and said, "If you did not show favoritism for the Empress, then it was all of You who conspired to implicate my Imperial Concubine mother. My Imperial Concubine mother was such a kind woman, I do not believe that she could be such a heinous person! Pang Zihuang, what does the Empress have, that You would want to aid her in framing the woman who has been by Your side for twenty years? Is Your heart so ruthless? So heartless? If You are truly connected to this affair, I won't let You get away with it!"

Pang Fei's hateful eyes stared directly at Pang Zihuang, his heart ached so much it hurt. His Imperial Father's favoritism towards Pang Ran has been a sharp blow in his heart, and now He has conspired with the Empress to frame my Imperial Concubine mother. All because my Imperial Concubine mother was a block of stone in their path.

My poor, innocent Imperial Concubine mother was viewed as a thorn in someone else's side and was punished for it.

Chapter 264: The First Clash (8)

"Pang Fei, you are too impudent!"

Pang Zihuang angrily slammed the table, and said furiously, "Do you really think that We would not punish you? If it were not for the fact that you did not wallow in the mire with them, We would not have let you off so easily!"

"Haha!"

Pang Fei laughed maniacally, the corners of his lips curved mockingly, "Pang Zihuang, do You still think that You are the Emperor of Black Tortoise Country? Don't even think about sending word to the Head of the Xia family in Pang Ran's stead. The Young Master of the Xia family is currently gravely ill and that elderly man does not have the time to deal with you. I, however, have already received the promise of the Second Master of the Xia family. Based on the situation at hand, he has full power to make the decision and soon the Imperial Throne will be mine! By then you will all be mere prisoners, hahaha!"

His laughter was full of joy, but his eyes were full of resentment.

Ever since he was a child, he had worked hard to receive his father's attention to prove to him that he was far better than that good-for-nothing Pang Ran! But what did He do? Not only is He unable to distinguish between right and wrong, showing favoritism towards this pair of mother and son, they've even conspired to harm my Imperial Concubine mother! Hence, even if Pang Zihuang were to repent for His actions, I will never forgive Him!

Hearing Pang Fei's words, the officers began discussing among each other; they did not think that such an event would occur in the Imperial Court, they would not even have imagined that the Xia family had already chosen the Third Prince as the next Emperor. It would seem that the Empress and the Sixth Prince

were in grave danger...

"Pang Fei, you are far too impudent!" Pang Zihuang rose from his seat, clearly enraged. He pointed His finger at Pang Fei angrily, "We have indulged you too much, and you have become far too arrogant and despotic! Now We will ask you, do you know the fundamentals of becoming an Emperor? Why do you want to become Emperor?"

Pang Fei laughed sneeringly, his lips curled into a taunting smile, "Only the strong deserve respect! Whether Emperor or anyone else, only the strong can dominate! A powerful person would have the ultimate power to decide who gets to live or die; once he decides that a person no longer deserves to live, that person must die!"

"No! You're wrong! Whether you're merely a man or a powerful person, the idea behind the philosophy of only the strong deserve respect is not incorrect! However, this is the position of an Emperor and as an Emperor, it is not about being the most physically strong, but the strength of the entire nation. He is responsible for the prosperity of the people! This is where your philosophy does not apply! Moreover, what meaning is there in dictating the life and death of others for you as a strong person? Does massacring all living beings prove that you are powerful? This only shows that you are weak, a truly strong person would not let others live in fear, but allow them to revere him in high esteem! This is what it truly means to be strong!"

Pang Zihuang shook His head disappointedly; He had never had a good impression on Pang Fei. It was not because he was not intelligent or strong enough, it was because he had never taken the lives of the people seriously! If he were to become Emperor, Pang Zihuang feared of what Black Tortoise Country would become.

The reason why He had favored Pang Ran so dearly was not only because he was the son of the Empress, but also because he did not have the arrogance of the noblemen and those of royal blood.

Unfortunately, the boy lacked the ambition to prove himself in the past and no matter how hard Pang Zihuang would beat him, he refused to reflect on this.

Right at that moment, an annoying voice was heard from outside the Imperial Court.

"I'd already guessed that that black-robed man I saw at the restaurant the other day was my Third Imperial brother, I didn't think that it was really him. And I never would have imagined that he would come to the Imperial Palace and say such things. Accumulating strength is to have the ultimate power to decide who gets to live or die? If that were true, I'm better off remaining a good-for-nothing, don't you agree, goddess?"

This voice was clearly full of jest, and Pang Fei's face instantly turned terrifyingly gloomy. When he turned his head and saw the two people who were walking into the Imperial Court, the anger in his eyes increased.

Chapter 265: The First Clash (9)

"Pang Ran!"

Hong!

An angry flame erupted in Pang Fei's chest, his eyes glared sharply at Pang Ran as if he was ready to gobble him up. He then took a deep breath, slowly quietened the vigorous rage in his heart and said coldly, "Pang Ran, just because you now have the help of the Hundred Herb Hell doesn't mean that you can act with tyrannical abuse. You would even make false charges against my Imperial Concubine mother. Unfortunately, you have forgotten, the only ones with authority to determine the successor to the Imperial Throne are the members of the Xia family! Even if you worked with your entire heart, the Imperial Throne will never be yours!"

At this moment, the people in the Imperial Court were not even in Pang Fei's eyes. No matter the circumstances, I have already received the promise of the Xia family, the Imperial Throne of Black Tortoise Country will soon be within my grasp.

As such, why should I even fear my subordinates?

Pang Ran was furious, he pointed at Pang Fei and bellowed, "Pang Fei, you little bastard, you are clearly Imperial Concubine Lin's child! Your moral conduct is indeed like mother like son, your Imperial Concubine mother murdered my First Imperial Brother, she even wanted to kill our Imperial Father and shift the blame to my Imperial mother! And you dare to release your fart here! You claim that the Xia family had given the Imperial Throne to you, since you have the capability, tell them to personally verify this now! Claims without proof count for nothing!"

As he said this, Pang Ran's face was full of disdain. The Xia family members are not blind with morality and conduct like Pang Fei's, they wouldn't possibly approve.

"You..." Pang Fei's fury was rising, then suddenly, he laughed, dull of riddicule, Very well, I will invite an emissary from the Xia family, then you will know if I am truly lying. Elder Zhao, if you please?"

From the moment he finished his sentence, an arrogant voice came from the doors, like as separate vacant noise piercing through everyone's ears. Then, the lower ranked officials felt their chests tighten, and nearly spat out a mouthful of blood.

Pang Ran's face did not look good as well. He grit his teeth hard and turned to face the door, only to see an elderly man in white walking in from outside, his clothes fluttered lightly, the white robe flowed gracefully with his every move. He looked just like a celestial being. Both of his arms rested behind his back, looking extremely profound. He looked like a morally upright person.

"Elder Zhao, it really is Elder Zhao! Although he is only an elder consul, he is a well-regarded person to Xia Qi, the Second Master of the Xia family, it seems that the Third Prince spoke the truth, the Xia family has truly selected the Third Prince to inherit the Imperial Throne."

"This time, danger is dawning upon the Empress and the Sixth Prince."

Seeing the barehanded elderly man walking in, the higher ranked officials began to whisper and debate amongst themselves.

As important statesmen, they would naturally choose to observe the situation, the Sixth Prince clearly cannot overcome the Third Prince, it would seem that many would stand on the Third Prince's side. The rest who have not made a decision remained on the fence as they were not happy with the Third Prince's earlier statements.

Indeed, the Emperor had power over the life and death of the officials. As such, with the Third Prince's manner of disregarding reason, inability to differentiate between right and wrong, only discriminating between the strong and weak, Black Tortoise

Country would become a bloodbath. As old officials, how could they possibly want an outcome like this?

The Third Prince had the heart of a strong man, but he is not fit to be the Emperor of a nation!

"How dare you, Pang Fei!"

Pang Zihuang looked enraged, his hand fiercely slammed on the table, his face was livid, "Who allowed you to enter the Xia household?"

"Hehe."

Pang Fei smiled coldly, the corners of his lips curled into a sneer, "Imperial Father, You are far too biased. So, of course, I would search for a way on my own. I couldn't possibly allow all of You to continue bullying and humiliating me. The Xia family caught wind of what has happened and were enraged. You say that I do not care about the livelihood of the people, but have you considered the dead whisperings of those on your bedside? You've committed such despicable acts in front of the Xia family, did you think that they would remain indifferent? Pang Zihuang, from now on, I no longer recognize you as my father! You are only my lowly prisoner!"

Chapter 266: The First Clash (10)

Dong!

Pang Zihuang's knees gave way, falling onto the dragon throne. His eyes stared disappointedly at Pang Fei, quickly turning into unquestionable resolution.

"Until the Master of the Xia family himself appears to verify this matter himself, We refuse to step down! Furthermore, We have already sent out Our recommendation for Pang Ran to the Master of the Xia family. So long as he does not provide Us with an answer, We will not be content!"

This time, before waiting for Pang Fei to speak, the white-robed man snorted coldly and glanced arrogantly at Pang Zihuang who was seated on the dragon throne. He replied coldly, "Our Master is currently preoccupied, why should he have to bother about small matters such as this? The Second Master's opinion is enough! Pang Zihuang, our Second Master has received news of Your conspiracy with the Empress to kill an Imperial Concubine, is this how an Emperor should act? Since You have managed such matters so unfairly, Your tenure as Emperor is now at its end. From now on, this elderly man shall carry out the orders of the Second Master, and hand the Imperial Throne of Black Tortoise Country over to the Third Prince, Pang Fei. None are allowed to object!"

Shua!

The hall burst into an abrupt discussion. The Xia family's decision was simple too sudden, no one was ready for it! Generally, whenever the Xia family had something important to inform the Imperial Palace, they would send the Xia family chamberlain to make an announcement. However, with Elder Zhao now standing in front of everyone, it could not possibly be fake!

It would seem that this time, there would be big changes in the Imperial Palace...

The high-ranking officials who were loyal to Black Tortoise Country could not help but feel apprehensive, unsure of how the fate of the entire nation would turn out to be.

"Puchi!"

In this grave moment, a laugh could be heard from one side of the room. Pang Ran could no longer contain himself and burst out laughing. He pointed his finger at Elder Zhao, his eyes filled with tears.

"Haha, this is too funny. Who do you f*cking think you are? Is your surname Xia? Since when have the affairs of the Xia family been determined by an elder consul? Have the Xia family members all been exterminated? I'm really going to laugh myself to death, this really is a case of assuming unwanted authority on the basis of some pretext, I advise you to sprinkle your urine in accordance with your own appearance. It's not your fault that you're born ugly, but swindling others is! Hey, what are you guys waiting for? Throw this swindler out!"

He then gestured insultingly at Elder Zhao, who was so enraged that he began to tremble.

"You... You... How dare you? How dare you?"

How many years has it been? Elder Zhao thought.

How many years has it been since anyone has dared to act so impudently to me, ever since the Xia household took me in?

Very well then!

I will show this kid the true meaning of disparity!

"Idiot boy, do you think that this Imperial Palace follows your rules? You would dare act with such arrogance to your masters? Since your parents have failed to educate you, then I, your master will teach you some manners!"

Hong!

A strong aura erupted from Elder Zhao's body, causing Pang Ran to tremble, his face immediately turned pale and beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. He nearly went into paralysis.

So heavy!

At that moment, Pang Ran felt as if his body were crushed by huge mountain, he felt suffocated.

"Hua!"

Pang Zihuang stood up immediately, wanting to beg for mercy, then He noticed a jade white hand gripping onto Pang Ran's shoulder. Color returned to Pang Ran's pale white face.

Seeing this, Pang Zihuang heaved a sigh of relief and a cold wind passed. Only then did He realize that He was drenched in cold sweat.

"So the Xia family's elder consul is actually a dog who threatens based on its master's power.

The corners of Gu Ruoyun's lips raised slightly. She raised her head to look at Elder Zhao's solemn old face and dryly said, "First of all, even the Xia family do not claim themselves to be the masters of the Imperial Palace of Black Tortoise Country, so what right do you have to call yourself the master? Second of all, Pang Ran's parents are still alive, and yet you say you want to teach him a lesson in his parents' stead, are you trying to substitute a generation? Have your own parents not taught you anything about modesty? If they have not, then I do not mind giving you a lesson or two. Third of all, you are an elder, isn't bullying someone from a younger generation a bit too much?"

Chapter 267: Master Xia's Rage (1)

Elder Zhao's old face sunk terrifyingly, his cold eyes swept over Gu Ruoyun's pure, beautiful face as he said, "Master of Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun? Hmph, you're overestimating the value of your Hundred Herb Hall. You are only mere merchants, no need for the Xia family to place any importance to! If you know any form of tact, don't meddle in other people's business. Otherwise, I wouldn't mind showing you what a truly terrifying power you've insulted."

Pang Ran shot a bizarre glance at Elder Zhao, many people have been trying to curry favor with the Hundred Herb Hall. Pang Ran has even heard that the Young Master of the Dongfang household had a close relationship with Gu Ruoyun. If Elder Zhao was a member of the Xia family, it probably would make sense. But he is merely an elder consul. Where did he find the courage to sprout such arrogant statements?

"Elder Zhao, they are both from the younger generation, if they have lacked morality in their speech, please do not quibble with them." said Pang Zihuang, sighing heavily, His expression did not look too good.

To be honest, if Elder Zhao were not an elder consul of the Xia family, He would have long ordered the guards to throw him out. Unfortunately, He cannot! This was not because He lacked courage, but if He did it, He would end up implicating many others.

The Xia family at Heaven City held the highest position in Black Tortoise Country, even a small footboy would need to be personally received by a high-ranking officer, what more an elder consul such as Elder Zhao?

"If You want me to stop quibbling with them, that's fine. Make them kneel before me and apologize, then I will forgive their

offense. Besides, when I am here, there is no distinction between the younger or older generation, only the weak and strong. The weak are only good for looking up towards the strong!"

Elder Zhao laughed coldly and shot a glance at Gu Ruoyun.

Before he had arrived, Elder Zhao investigated the woman's background. Based on the rumors from Azure Dragon Country, the Master of Hundred Herb Hall possessed a White Tiger and Azure Dragon! But these were mere rumors. Besides, based on the rumors, the White Tiger's rank is only at a mid-level Martial King, and the Azure Dragon was only for show. There is nothing for him to fear!

He, on the other hand, is a high-level Martial King, it would be an easy win to go up against an insignificant mid-level Martial King spiritual beast.

"The weak are only good for looking up towards the strong, that is quite correct!"

Gu Ruoyun nodded her head in agreement, "I hope you will remember your own words! Baobao, I'll leave this guy to you."

Roar!

A wolf whistle was then heard, and a bright white light appeared in front of everyone's eyes. A large snow wolf lunged towards Elder Zhao. At that moment, its clear aura was shown, and its eyes revealed its savage nature.

"Mid-level Martial King?"

Elder Zhao's face sank, he did not think that this woman would have a mid-level Martial King spiritual beast! But it was not the rumored White Tiger! But of course, the White Tiger was a mythical spiritual beast, how could it possibly be in this woman's possession?

Earlier in the gardens, officials who came across Baobao's magnificence felt their feet turn cold, and immediately wanted to

slip away.

"Goddess, has the little wolf leveled up?"

Pang Ran blinked his eyes, staring at Gu Ruoyun, completely flabbergasted.

The Baobao that he had met not too long ago was only a low-level Martial King, how did it reach mid-level so quickly?

At this rate, she will have two mid-level Martial King spiritual beasts, the other a White Tiger at formidable fighting strength! Based on the White Tiger's power, it would not be a problem to fight with anyone at one level higher than it was.

"Mmm."

Gu Ruoyun touched her nose, and smiled dryly, "It had its breakthrough last night, so I thought I'd test its capabilities today."

Chapter 268: Master Xia's Rage (2)

The corners of Pang Ran's eyes twitched as he stared speechlessly at Gu Ruoyun's pretty and calm face, and took a few deep breaths to prevent himself from cursing.

This woman's luck is far too good! First, she owns a mid-level Martial King White Tiger, and now even the snow wolf has had its breakthrough, constantly comparing one's self to others will only make one angry!

Elder Zhao's expression slowly returned to normal, he snorted coldly and said disdainfully, "It's nothing more than a mere spiritual beast that has recently broken through to a mid-level Martial King. How could it possibly go up against a high-level Martial King? Merely a grain of rice in front of a bright light. yet it dares to go up against the sun and the moon. Since you're looking for death, Gu Ruoyun, I don't mind destroying this spiritual beast before destroying you!"

Hong!

His aura erupted with a bang, and charged towards Baobao like howling wind and torrential rain, while lighting engulfed his body.

However, at that very moment, Baobao's eyes displayed ridicule.

There was no mistake, it was sneering at him!

Such a human-like expression angered Elder Zhao even more, this snow wolf is about to meet its demise yet dares to act so smugly, it did not attach any importance to me!

"Arrogant disciple!"

Elder Zhao smiled coldly, raising a hurricane around his body, his entire being was engulfed within it, his white robes fluttering wildly, his expression clearly showing off, and a strong force pierced into his sword, preparing to strike Baobao head on.

Just then, a cold and solemn voice was suddenly heard from outside the Imperial Court, stopping the laughter midway in his throat. Unable to swallow or let it out, his face turned red. He nearly choked himself to death.

"Elder Zhao, what are you doing here?"

The old man's voice was filled with anger, dissatisfaction, and skepticism.

When everyone turned their heads to look, they saw a man in a green robe streaking across the sky, coming from high above, and slowly descending upon reaching outside the Imperial Court. His dignified eyes brought unquestionable authority.

"Flying through the skies? A powerful Martial Emperor? Heavens, it's a powerful Martial Emperor!"

Powerful Martial Emperors, they were like gods in the eyes of many, so unreachable and unapproachable, and in all of Black Tortoise Country, only one person had such power.

The Master of the Xia family, Xia Zhentian!

Who else but he could reach such powerful heights?

"Ma... Master..."

Upon seeing the old man, Elder Zhao began to tremble, nearly losing control of his body. And at that moment, Baobao fiercely lunged towards him and sent him flying. Elder Zhao ended up spitting out a mouthful of blood and grimaced in pain.

"So, you're still aware that this old man is the Master of the family?"

Master Xia straightened his sleeves, a strong sense of intimidation emitted from his body. His cold eyes stared at the pale-faced Elder Zhao who was sprawled on the floor. He coldly asked, "Confess, who allowed you to cause trouble in the Imperial Palace?"

Hong!

Master Xia's voice was thunderous, booming loudly in Elder Zhao's ears. He felt as if someone had punched his chest, and spat out another mouthful of blood. His elderly face was drained of color.

Even if he were a high-level Martial King, he would not be able to resist the intimidating might of a powerful Martial Emperor.

Chapter 269: Master Xia's Rage (3)

Elder Zhao's face was now a terrifying sight. He never expected for the Master to suddenly make an appearance here. Didn't Second Master say that the Master was preoccupied with the Young Master's illness and had no time to bother about these matters? He wondered.

Otherwise, he would never have dared to arrive in the Imperial Household with such prestige!

"Master!"

Elder Zhao fiercely gritted his teeth at the thought and said, "I received word that there would be a great change in the Imperial Household. The Empress and the Sixth Prince have schemed against the law, not only have they planted false evidence against Imperial Concubine Lin and the Imperial Advisor, they have even planned to exterminate the illustrious Third Prince! His Royal Highness, Pang Fei is not only highly gifted but is highly resourceful and worldly as well. He is the best candidate to inherit the Imperial Throne. Having him is a great fortune for Black Tortoise Country and the Xia Family. How could I stand idly by while others persecute such precious talent? So I took the initiative in the name of the Xia Family, to protect this precious talent!"

No matter what, the Imperial Throne can only belong to the Third Prince. He is far superior in every aspect when compared to the Fifth and Sixth Prince. That is why Elder Zhao dared to speak so boldly, he was certain that the Master would not blame him for this.

After all, he's doing all of this for the sake of the Xia family!

Pang Fei shot a glance at Pang Ran, and a strange haze flashed across his gaze. He then looked towards Master Xia, who remained steadfast in the wind, and spoke in a neither servile nor overbearing tone, "Master of the Xia Family, I do not believe that I

have the capabilities to bear the mantle of the Emperor of a kingdom, but my Fifth Imperial Brother is hedonistic, constantly infatuated with women, my Sixth Imperial Brother is a born good-for-nothing, vicious and merciless, and will not stop until he gets what he wants. I cannot bear for Black Tortoise Country to fall into the hands of these two traitors. Hence, I have no choice but to accept the position. But please rest assured, Master Xia, I will lead Black Tortoise Country to glory. I won't disappoint you."

His face beamed with a confident smile. Those words should be enough to convince Master Xia into insisting that he should be the Emperor instead, he thought. And I, who cannot endure the sight of Black Tortoise Country falling into the hands of traitors, who has not betrayed the patronage of the Xia Family for the Imperial Throne, has no choice but to accept Master Xia's request.

"Oh?" Master Xia raised an eyebrow, and turned his gaze, coldly and majestically, towards Pang Fei, "You claim to say that the Sixth Prince is vicious and merciless? As far as I've heard, it is true that the Sixth Prince is indeed born a good-for-nothing. But vicious and merciless? That is false."

"Master Xia, everything I've said is true. It is only that Pang Ran has managed to mask his true intentions too well and has conspired with an outsider to bring harm upon the Imperial Household. The woman standing next to him is the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall from Azure Dragon Country, Gu Ruoyun. She came here harboring ill intentions. If her goal is not to take over the whole of Black Tortoise Country, then I cannot understand why she would help this useless good-for-nothing and plant false charges on my Imperial Concubine mother! Furthermore, the Hundred Herb Hall has grand ambitions, I have long heard that they have coveted the Xia Family like a tiger watching its prey."

Pang Fei laughed coldly, his gloomy eyes carried a hint of viciousness. He believed that Master Xia would never let off this meddlesome woman after hearing his words!

Sure enough, Master Xia's cold gaze now turned towards Gu Ruoyun. His old face carried a solemn chill, and spoke in a serious tone, "You are Gu Ruoyun of the Hundred Herb Hall? I've been looking forward to meeting you for a very long time. But why have you come to Black Tortoise Country, Lady Ruoyun? I don't believe that there's anything of interest for you here."

Faced with Master Xia's interrogation, Gu Ruoyun's face remained calm and unchanged. Her pure, beautiful features carried a soft smile, her clear eyes like water, she giggled lightly, "If I said that I have come to see the Xia Family. Would you believe me?"

Master Xia said nothing more. In that moment, the entire Imperial Court fell silent. So quiet that everyone could hear the thumping sound of their own hearts.

Chapter 270: Master Xia's Rage (4)

"Such an idiot!" whispered Pang Fei in his heart. He initially thought that this woman would deny it. He certainly never thought that she would actually admit her intentions towards the Xia Family. Isn't she looking for death?

"Goddess!"

Pang Ran panicked at the sight of Master Xia's sinking expression and tugged at Gu Ruoyun's sleeve nervously while whispering, "The opposition is a Martial Emperor, we should probably just stick it out for now. The Imperial Throne isn't so great. I don't want it anymore. I'll even stop eating red roasted pork so please don't be reckless."

Pang Ran's words were intended to prevent Gu Ruoyun from challenging a powerful Martial Emperor. It's only an Imperial Throne, it's really not that great. So what if I don't become the Emperor? If we offend Master Xia, the first one to die would most likely be Gu Ruoyun.

Yet, Gu Ruoyun's face was full of smiles as she gazed at the old man before her.

"Haha!"

Just as the entire court was filled with nervous tension, Master Xia laughed boldly and without any inhibition. Satisfied, he turned towards Gu Ruoyun, "You are certainly the daughter of Gu Tian and Dongfang Yu! Not bad, not bad at all! Actually, I've already guessed your intentions on my way here. But I wanted to hear it from you myself. Furthermore, not many can remain so nonchalant when under my intimidation. I quite admire you, little girl. It's a pity that my grandson has yet to mature. Otherwise, I would give him to you as a husband."

His words were like a bolt of lightning, rendering everyone

speechless.

This... What is this? What a giant turn of events! And he's selling off his own grandson?

"Er... There's no need for that."

The corners of Gu Ruoyun's mouth twitched.

His grandson? She thought. If I remember correctly, there is only one male descendant in the third generation of the Xia family, Xia Linyu! If he gives Xia Linyu to me as a husband, then what would that mean? Incest?

Actually, Master Xia was only shooting the breeze. Even though he has thoroughly investigated Gu Ruoyun's background; not only was this girl fortunate enough to obtain the Hundred Herb Hall, but she built its achievements from scratch! The extent of the Hundred Herb Hall's power now was due to her efforts in expanding it.

Additionally, the renowned Ghost Doctor is her disciple, and while many do not know this, he knows that the mother of this girl was a pearl in the palm of the Dongfang family. She is also the Master of the White Tiger and the Azure Dragon. All her qualifications amounted to her being the perfect match for his grandson.

But he is an open-minded grandfather and understands that his grandson's feelings and affections need to grow on their own. He will not make the decision for them.

"Master Xia, this woman harbors ill intentions. You must not allow her to deceive you! She herself has admitted that her goal is the Xia Family, which means that she plans on taking over the Xia Family! How could you allow this walking disaster to continue to live?"

The color on Pang Fei's face changed instantly, he gritted his teeth and glared fiercely at Gu Ruoyun.

He did not, however, notice the color rapidly draining from Elder Zhao's face when he spoke.

Moron! Elder Zhao thought. You motherf*cking moron! The Master holds such great dignity! Who would dare to question his decisions? This Pang Fei is completely brainless. I can't understand why the Second Master would want to send assistance to such a moron!

If I had known about this earlier, I would not have accepted this intervention. Master clearly admires Gu Ruoyun, and he would be greatly displeased with the things I've committed!

I'm done for! I'm going to be destroyed thanks to this moron!

At this moment, Elder Zhao was already watching as Master Xia's facial expression turn gravely serious; a storm was brewing in the Master's eyes.

Chapter 271: Master Xia's Rage (5)

"A mere Imperial Prince dares to speak to me in such a manner? Is this how the Imperial Princes have been brought up?" Master Xia smiled coldly, "Pang Zihuang, how do you educate your sons? Such a jealous heart and such arrogance, how can he be an Imperial prince?"

Pang Zihuang stared at Pang Fei in disappointment. If He still felt love for this son, then He would have been greatly hurt and disappointed in the sins that Pang Fei had committed.

"Master Xia, Pang Fei...has long been stripped of his title as an Imperial Prince of Black Tortoise Country. Do whatever you wish to him, Master Xia. We leave this decision to you."

Once He said His piece, He closed His eyes and didn't even look at Pang Fei's frantic expression.

"Good!" Master Xia turned his gaze towards Pang Fei and simply said, "Pang Fei, you have committed an unforgivable sin. Your punishment will be determined in the Xia Family's torture chamber. You'd best ready yourself. As for the matter concerning the inheritance of the Imperial Throne, the throne will go to Pang Ran."

Hong!

Pang Fei's body trembled as if he had been struck by a bolt of lightning. Imperial Concubine mother and uncle are both dead, and now I am being chased out of the Imperial Household. The enemy, Pang Ran is to inherit the Imperial Throne...

All these factors combined collapsed the defenses in his mental state. He charged like a wild man towards Pang Ran.

"Die Pang Ran! I'll make sure that you die!"

"You are only a useless good-for-nothing, what right do you have in becoming the Emperor? A useless thing like you should have

been dead long ago. The Imperial Throne is mine and mine only, hahaha!"

He tore his hair apart like a madman and his eyes were filled with viciousness. Anyone who was unaware of the situation would assume that Pang Ran had burst Pang Fei's anus. Pang Fei's maddened expression looked ready to dismember Pang Ran into a thousand pieces.

However, before he could reach Pang Ran, the General appeared in front of him and sent him flying out of the way with one slap. Pang Fei spat out a mouthful of blood, staining his crazed expression red.

I cannot accept this! He thought angrily. I really cannot accept this! A victory was within my grasp, how could this happen?

That's right! This is all Gu Ruoyun's fault. If it weren't for her, Pang Ran and his mother would have been long dead! She is the true ringleader behind all of this!

"How daring of you, boldly trying to cause harm to others in front of this old man!" Master Xia's face darkened in color, like an evening before a storm and he spoke coldly, "Pang Fei, so you think that Pang Ran is a good-for-nothing and cannot be compared to you? However, I believe that he can lead Black Tortoise Country into glory! So what if he is a good-for-nothing? He has the talent to rule a country, and he does not view his subjects as mole crickets and ants! Because of your attitude, you can never be Emperor! Black Tortoise Country does not need a powerful person, but someone who can bring it to greater heights!"

Pang Fei's entire body gradually grew weak, he simply could not understand it. Why can't a powerful man be Emperor? Yet a good-for-nothing has managed to win the position...

"Haha!" Suddenly, Pang Fei laughed. His laugh carried a sense of madness, "Pang Ran, I've lost to you. I've lost to a good-for-nothing like you! But do you think you would have won if it weren't for the

help you received from the Hundred Herb Hall? The heavens know what you've done, you've used your appearance to deceive everyone. But one day, you shall receive retribution! You will definitely receive retribution! Once that happens, I will make you kneel and apologize to my Imperial Concubine mother!"

Pu!

Pang Fei spat out another mouthful of blood. His pupils appeared to dilate, his eyes gradually turned white and he was losing his breath...

"His excitement has burst a vein in his heart, he will die soon."

Master Xia shook his head and spoke calmly. Then, he seemed to remember something and turned his attention to the momentarily forgotten Elder Zhao.

"Elder Zhao, do you think you've given me any choice?"

Elder Zhao was a high-level Martial King. If I did not appear in the nick of time, he might have already killed Gu Ruoyun! thought Master Xia. Lord Lingxiao has been searching for this girl. If she dies, not even a hundred Elder Zhaos would be able to pay off this debt!

Chapter 272: Master Xia's Rage (6)

Elder Zhao had initially planned on taking advantage of Master Xia's momentary lapse of attention on him to slip away until he suddenly heard the latter's voice and instantly paused in his footsteps. His elderly face turned very pale. In his panic, his forehead became drenched with cold sweat.

"Master, I was only doing this in consideration of the Xia Family. Nothing more."

He fiercely gritted his teeth and forcibly swallowed the information that he wanted to convey to Xia Qi. No matter the circumstances, he was greatly indebted to the Second Master Xia, and he cannot reveal his intentions.

"Were your intentions truly in consideration of the Xia Family, or are you simply using our name to rain tyrannical abuse? I reckon you of all people should be most clear on this! Elder Zhao, such a higher-up like you can no longer stay with the Xia Family. From now on, you are no longer a part of the Xia Family!"

Hong!

Like thunder from a clear sky, Elder Zhao was thoroughly dumbfounded. He never imagined that the Master would throw him out of the Xia Family. This punishment was far more severe than ten great tortures. He simply could not bear it.

Because the Xia Family has now forsaken him, he no longer has any reason to stay on the mainland.

"Master."

Putong!

Elder Zhao fell onto the ground and knelt down. He cried out profusely, "I have remained loyal and devoted to the Xia Family for so many years. If I have no contributions, I have indeed worked hard for the family. I've only made one mistake and now you want

me out of the family. Master, won't this behavior disappoint the other members of the Xia Family?"

In that instant, a strict, cold and dignified pair of eyes turned towards Elder Zhao, as sharp as a sword.

Master Xia's expression remained cold. He clasped his hands behind his back and replied, "When has anyone had the right to question my decisions? If you're not happy with my behavior, you can certainly leave the Xia Family. I won't stop you!"

He is the Master of the Xia Family. Hence, he governs everything in the entire Xia Family, including Heaven City. He will not change his decision. If you're not happy? That's fine. You can leave the Xia Family.

After all, the large Xia Family would not be bothered by the departure of one or two members.

So don't think that he would feel threatened with such matters!

Elder Zhao closed his eyes in despair. Suddenly, he laughed and stood up. He stared mockingly at Master Xiao from head to toe and spoke in a voice filled with hatred.

"Master, you threw me out of the family, all for the sake of one tiny Hundred Herb Hall... I believe you'll regret this one day!"

Even though the Master did indeed hold Pang Ran in great admiration, he would not have thrown out a powerful high-level Martial King for the sake of the insignificant Pang Ran. One should know that the number of Martial Kings in the mainland was few and far in between, and Elder Zhao is a high-level Martial King!

Isn't he doing this for the sake of currying favor with the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall? So that she would allow him to purchase a few pills?

Such greed and selfishness, how could he not regret this in the future?

"Master Xia, I hope that when the time comes, you won't be kneeling before me and begging for my return! By the way, Gu Ruoyun, don't think that this old man is sincere in helping you. Based on the fact that he is a greedy and selfish person, why would he help you if it were not for the fact that you have a few pills on hand? Once you've lost your usefulness, you will soon die by his hand. Haha!"

Elder Zhao laughed again and retracted the murderous intent in his eyes. He brushed his sleeves, turned around and stumbled as he left. I looked as if he was going to slip and fall at any moment.

"Merely a jumping jester."

Master Xia smiled coldly in disapproval. He turned and faced the young girl behind him, and his eyes, which were initially as frosty as an icebox, now turned warm like a blooming flower and smiled.

"Little girl, I've heard that you have an Azure Dragon and a White Tiger as your spiritual beasts. Could you show them to me?"

Chapter 273: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (1)

The old man's face was very obviously filled with anticipation, and all eyes were now turned towards Gu Ruoyun. But in front of the eyes of the crowd, the young girl simply shrugged her shoulders and calmly replied, "Sorry, I don't know what you're talking about."

Even though Yunyao and Tianqiong have shown themselves in front of everyone but who could have confirmed that they were indeed the legendary White Tiger and Azure Dragon? As long as she denied it, everyone would dismiss it as a rumor.

Besides, this old man had asked to see the two beasts from the start. Obviously, he did not have good intentions. She would never admit to this!

Master Xia's expression froze. He stared at Gu Ruoyun, who was feigning innocence and took a deep breath, nearly confessing Lord Lingxiao's order. But he did not dare to assume that the two beasts in her hands were the ones that Lord Lingxiao had been searching for. For reasons of safety, it's best to keep this under wraps for now.

"This... Lady Gu, I have no ill intentions. But if you do have the two spiritual beasts in your hands, why not show them to me and broaden my horizons? What do you say?" Master Xia, with great difficulty, flashed a kindly smile and coaxed in a gentle manner.

If anyone from the Xia Family were to see this, they would probably fall to the ground in fright. One must understand that their Master has never shown such an expression on his face and had only treated the Little Master, Xia Linyu with extra special preference. Yet, in front of this woman, he is displaying such gentleness?

The sun must be rising from the West.

Gu Ruoyun blinked and replied while acting puzzled, "I actually do have a dragon and a tiger, but they are not the Azure Dragon or the White Tiger. Who would spread such rumors? They are simply regular spiritual beasts!"

What?

The minds of the entire hall went blank.

They had seen the tiger and dragon with their own eyes, especially that very moment when the White Tiger had flown into a rage. That was a scene that all of them could not forget. And now, Gu Ruoyun is saying that the spiritual beasts were not the legendary Azure Dragon and the White Tiger?

It's true. The Azure Dragon and the White Tiger were Divine Beasts that they've only ever heard about in myths. None of them have seen them before! Even though it was recorded in the history books but they have yet to make their debut in real life. It is said that one dragon breath from the Azure Dragon can destroy an entire country and that the White Tiger can flatten mountains and rivers in one step. While the two spiritual beasts that she possesses are indeed powerful, they did not have the formidable power of the fabled Divine Beasts.

But because of the rumors spread by others, they automatically believed that these two spiritual beasts were indeed part of the Four Divine Beasts — the Azure Dragon and White Tiger.

Master Xia stared suspiciously at Gu Ruoyun. At this point he wasn't sure whether Gu Ruoyun is truly in possession of the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger or was she merely pretending to be naive? Whatever it was, he needed to personally confirm this.

"Then, little girl, do you think you can summon them for me to have a look?"

"Well..." Gu Ruoyun rubbed her nose, "They aren't able to come out now."

She was speaking the truth. Yunyao was currently on the brink of a breakthrough and is working hard towards it. Naturally, Tianqiong was accompanying her. The two beasts could not appear under these circumstances.

"Fine then."

Master Xia sighed with disappointment. Suddenly, the light in his eyes changed, and he smiled again, "Lady Gu, would you be interested in be coming to the Xia Family home as a guest?"

He'd thought that no matter what, he'll kidnap her first and then think of a plan. He could only confirm the identity of the two spiritual beasts and determine whether they are indeed the friends that Lord Lingxiao had been searching for when she is close by.

"If it's no trouble, Master Xia." Gu Ruoyun smiled calmly, and a strange light flashed across her eyes.

She initially thought that once she met with a Xia Family member, entering the Xia Household would still require a bit of time. She did not expect for it to be so easy...

Chapter 274: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (2)

Heaven City, at the Xia Family estate.

In the courtyard, the winds brought falling leaves as Xia Qi's expression darkened. No one could tell what he was thinking, only his eyes showed an obviously sinister intent. He lightly puckered his lips into a cold and eerie smile.

Suddenly, a green-robed elder cheerfully walked in and standing beside him was a girl also in green robes. Every feature of the young girl's face was pure and beautiful. Her eyes were as clear as water and her face held a gentle smile. Even thought she did not have a face that could cause the downfall of cities; anyone would feel comfortable upon seeing her face.

But when he saw the two, Xia Qi's face grew increasingly cold. His heart was gripped with dissatisfaction and jealousy.

What is the meaning of this? It's bad enough that the bastard, Xia Linyu commanded all of the old man's love and affection, and now he is acting so gentle and kind to an outsider? Yet when he is faced with his own biological son, he would pull a dissatisfied face?

Xia Qi took a deep breath and swallowed the hatred in his eyes. His robes swayed with the wind as he approached Master Xia, "Father, you've finally returned. This must be the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun? You're certainly from a talented generation. I've looked forward to meeting you for a very long time."

His face held a warm smile and no one can see the clenched fist that he was concealing under his sleeves. His heart filled was with the flames of an almost irrepressible anger.

That Elder Zhao was completely useless! He can't even take care of this woman and allowed the old man to bring her here. It would seem that killing her is now more difficult than ever.

Furthermore, he had already sent a servant to the Azure Dragon country with the news that Xia Linyu of the Xia Family has murdered Gu Ruoyun! It was only a matter of time before the members of the Hundred Herb Hall would be coming after Xia Linyu...

Gu Ruoyun must die before that happens!

"Xia Qi, what are you doing here?"

Seeing Xia Qi in the courtyard, Master Xia raised an eyebrow unhappily and spoke curtly, "I don't know what you've been doing the entire day, you were probably strolling idly about all day. Get back to training! You don't even act like an elder to Yu'er. Even though he was once a good-for-nothing, he never gave up on his training. But what about you, all you do is befriend a pack of scoundrels. Especially that Elder Zhao, he doesn't amount to anything! If it were not for his connection to you, how would he have been able to enter the Xia Household? Next time, do not concern yourself with the internal affairs of the Xia Household. Study hard and train more."

These words meant that Xia Qi's influence was only that of a figurehead.

Meanwhile, the fist concealed in his robe clenched even tighter and started trembling slightly. But no matter how furious he felt, he continued to smile and warmly replied, "Father's lessons are prompt. I shall carefully follow your teachings and will now take my leave."

Once he turned his back, the smile hanging on his face slowly sank out of sight and an intense fury began to stir in the depths of his eyes...except he chose not to let it out in the end.

Because now was not the time...

Gu Ruoyun did not speak during the entire time and watched Xia Qi as he left with an obscure glint in her eye.

"Ah!"

"AH AH AH!"

Just then, a heart-breaking cry was heard, coming from the front portion of the courtyard. This caused Master Xia's facial expression to change quickly. He no longer cared about Gu Ruoyun and rushed off.

...

In a room, a man clutched his head in agony, banging it against the wall. Servants who stood behind him rushed to pull him away. But before they could even reach him, a powerful aura burst from his body and sent all of them flying away from him.

Blood rushed to his skull then dragged downwards again, it was a ghastly sight. He seemed not to notice this and banged his head against the hard walls.

Chapter 275: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (3)

Master Xia rushed in to find the situation unfolding before his eyes. He roared in anguish and appeared behind Xia Zixi in a flash. His palm landed on his shoulder and held it tightly, "Zixi, what are you doing?"

"Father, let me die! I am in pain! Please let me die!"

Xia Zixi struggled madly against Master Xia's hold. He had suffered too much for the past few months, in his opinion death was a welcome solution. Rather than suffering like this for the rest of his life and dragging down the entire Xia Family with his agony, he would rather choose to die.

"Die? Xia Zixi. If you f*cking want to die, then you are no son of mine! There are no cowards in the Xia Family! What is the difference between your intentions of running away and a coward? Where has the valiant and brave son of mine disappeared to? When have you become so weak? In the months of your illness, hasn't Yu'er endured enough for you? He is only a child of over ten years of age and as his father, you have been stirring up a storm all over the place. Is this how you plan on treating him? He lost his mother at such a young age and now you want him to lose his father too? Do you think you deserve to be his father?"

Master Xia's tone of voice grew more gentle as Xia Zixi's mind gradually settled into a calmer state. He took a deep breath and spoke with a hint of resentment, "Yu'er is very gifted. But has been plagued with ill health since childhood and was unable to cultivate properly. Everyone considered him a good-for-nothing. But even though he lacked the abilities, he was never weak. He even cultivated in secret behind our backs. He did not care for the opinions of others and he never gave up. But you? You can't even endure a bout of pain, and now you're thinking of death. You're worse than a child!"

Xia Zixi's body trembled. He slowly collapsed numbly onto the ground and sobbed, "Father, I know that I have let Yu'er down. I was not able to take good care of him since his birth. And now, because I'm constantly stirring up a storm, he's gone to find the God of Doctors for a cure. But I know my body well. Even if the God Da Luo himself were to appear, he would not be able to save me. Why allow me to drag the entire Xia Family down? That's why I want to end my life."

"If you truly feel that you've let Yu'er down, then you should not even consider death! How would you know for sure that no one can cure you of your ailment? If you are truly thinking of the future of the Xia Family, then stand tall! A coward is not fit to be Yu'er's father!"

Yes, I am a coward, thought Xia Zixi.

Compared to my son, who had been steadfast since he was young, I am not fit to be his father! Not only was I unable to shield him but in the end, I've become a burden to my (still) very young son and he has had to do so many things for me...

And I? Not only did I not think of Yu'er's support, I am so weak that I would even choose to escape! I am not a man!

Gu Ruoyun stood at the doorway, her eyes fixed upon the man on the ground and lightly raised an eyebrow. If her guess was right this man is the Young Master of the Xia Family, Xia Linyu's father!

It does not matter whether Xia Linyu is truly the brother whom she had been searching for, this man needs help!

Not for him, but because the man's son is named Xia Linyu!

"That's right."

Suddenly, Master Xia seemed to have remembered something, and quickly turned his head towards Gu Ruoyun, his eyes filled with hope, "Little Gu girl, may I ask for a favor? I've heard that the Ghost Doctor can cure any disease, could you summon her to help

save my son? As long as you can aid me, I will promise you anything!"

Chapter 276: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (4)

Instantly, all eyes fell upon Gu Ruoyun's face.

Did we hear it wrongly or did the Master just say that this woman was acquainted with the Ghost Doctor? Furthermore, it would seem that the Ghost Doctor was under her command! How could this be? One must know that the Ghost Doctor can be quite contrary and even if this girl has an unconventional relationship with her, with the Ghost Doctor's condescending attitude, she wouldn't possibly agree to save a total stranger.

Unless...

This woman is the Ghost Doctor's Master! But as far as we know, only one person is the Master of the Ghost Doctor — the mysterious Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, who has yet to make an appearance! That person was like a myth.

Wait a minute!

Suddenly, everyone seemed to have remembered something and the expression in their eyes began to slowly change.

If the rumors were true, the mysterious girl of the Hundred Herb Hall is only around sixteen years of age. If you take into account our Master's words, could it be that this girl was indeed the mysterious Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun?

While the Xia Family has great power and authority and their old Master has somehow managed to break through to the rank of a Martial Emperor, this is not something that the tiny Hundred Herb Hall can achieve. But the temptation of the pills in the Hundred Herb Hall was probably too great for anyone to resist...

The young girl folded her arms across her chest and smiled gently at the middle-aged man on the ground. One corner of her lips curled upwards, "If he can hold on for a while longer, I can send for the Ghost Doctor to come here. Do not worry, Master Xia."

From the beginning, she could already see through Xia Zixi's ailment. Based on Wei Yiyi's powers, it was certainly curable and she did not need to step in. Furthermore, the distance between Azure Dragon Country and Black Tortoise Country is not very far, Wei Yiyi should be able to hurry over in time.

...

At Azure Dragon Country.

The confused chatter of the crowds filled the bustling streets and everyone could not help but sigh incessantly as they debated about Gu Ruoyun's crusade into the Imperial Palace with the Azure Dragon and White Tiger. Most of them still displayed admiration for her actions.

This was the time of day when business was booming in the Hundred Herb Hall but the atmosphere in the medicinal hall was filled with an aura of cold suffering. An average-looking youth concealed himself in the crowd and deliberately pinched his nose to disguise his voice, "By the way, have you heard of the recent news from Black Tortoise Country?"

"Black Tortoise Country? What happened at Black Tortoise Country?"

One person responded. No one knew who spoke.

The young man in green smiled coldly and a sinister light flitted across the slits of his eyes, "As we speak, the Master of the Xia Family, Xia Qi has detained her front of the eyes of the public, and will soon execute her. I simply happened to witness the scene. Tsk tsk, what a pity for such a gifted talent to have fallen."

Hong!

His words were like lighting crashing down from the skies, causing an explosion that silenced the entire medicinal hall.

Once he had left that piece of information, the youth slowly retreated, stealing a glance at the dumbfounded crowd. His cold

gaze hardened.

I have completed my Lord's mission, now to return and receive my reward...

The Hundred Herb Hall paused in complete silence, then the situation grew perilous.

"Someone seemed to have said that Gu Ruoyun has been murdered by the Xia Family?"

"Heavens, is this true? The stunning, peerless genius has fallen? Just like that?"

"I think it's possible. Gu Ruoyun is so egotistical and arrogant, on top of that she's also quite condescending. The Xia Family has a high position and great authority. She must have insulted one of the Xia Family members with her arrogance which lead to her execution in the hands of the Xia Family. This might actually have happened."

"Aish, Gu Ruoyun is far too young. The world is huge, and there are all sorts of people in it. She does not know when to hold herself back. Isn't this great, she has collided with a metal board, hasn't she?"

Chapter 277: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (5)

The crowd burst into a fervent discussion, confirming the news that, in reality, has yet to actually receive confirmation. While many felt sympathetic, some took joy in this disaster.

Like the Crown Prince's minions, for example.

They have long disliked Gu Ruoyun and felt that the Heavens were indeed watching over them. She had always acted with such aggression, is this not her retribution?

...

At the back of the hall, Shopkeeper Zhao rushed in and panted, out of breath, "Lady Ghost Doctor, Elder Yu, this is not good! Something terrible has happened!"

"What happened?"

A smock of gray robes emerged from the study, Elder Yu frowned, and replied unhappily, "What's caused you to become so frantic?"

"Huff, huff!"

Shopkeeper Zhao forcibly took two deep breaths, his face filled with panic, "Elder Yu, it's her Ladyship. Something's happened to her Ladyship!"

"What?"

Hong!

Elder Yu's body shook and his face turned ashen. He immediately grabbed Shopkeeper Zhao by the collar and bellowed, "What did you say? What happened to her Ladyship?"

Shopkeeper Zhao nearly lost his breath, his elderly face turned very red. After a long pause, his breathing went back to normal and he finally explained, "Moments ago, I walked into the Hundred Herb Hall when I heard a discussion. Someone just said that they

saw her Ladyship murdered by the Master of the Xia Family with their own eyes! So I rushed in to inform you, Elder Yu."

Peng!

Elder Yu loosened his grip and stumbled back a few steps. His face was filled with disappointment and sorrow. But most of it was fuelled by an intense fury.

"Well played, Xia Family! Hahaha! Now that Master Xia has broken through into the rank of a Martial Emperor, he can now proclaim himself as an Emperor? Our Dongfang Family is nothing to him? Shopkeeper Zhao, send word to the Young Master and everyone in the Devil Sect! We will attack the Xia Family and avenge the death of our Lady!"

Elder Yu gritted his teeth fiercely. He could imagine how angry the Young Master would be once he has heard of this! The Xia Family had dug their own grave!

That's right, he recalled. Not too long ago, the Little Master of the Xia Family, Xia Linyu appeared in Azure Dragon Country. Since the old man had dared to murder her Ladyship, then he should prepare himself for a debt that costs a thousand times more!

What is the meaning of causing an upheaval out of concern? Elder Yu's reaction explains this perfectly. Upon hearing about Gu Ruoyun's death, he completely lost his senses. Otherwise, he probably would have reconsidered his words.

After all, Gu Ruoyun was in possession of the Azure Dragon. Even if she were unable to defeat a powerful Martial Emperor, escaping him would not be a problem. How could she possibly die by his hand?

"Elder Yu, someone who claims to be from the Xia Family requests an audience."

At that moment, a footboy hurriedly walked in and informed him

respectfully.

"The Xia Family?"

Elder Yu laughed coldly, and replied with enormous rage, "A member of the Xia Family dares to show his face! Bring him in here!"

"Yes, Elder Yu."

Then, the footboy immediately retreated. Before he could disappear, a middle-aged man in green followed him and walked in. He looked at the enraged Elder Yu, and scorn filled the corner of his eyes.

"Hong!"

In his anger, a great aura burst from Elder Yu's body, changing into a tornado and aiming towards the middle-aged man. Engulfed in the tornado, the middle-aged man's expression remained unchanged. The ridicule in his eyes increased.

"Is this how the Hundred Herb Hall welcomes its guests? You've certainly opened my eyes to the world. Then I, of the Xia Family, shall return you with the same courtesy!"

Hong!

Two tornados clashed against one another in mid-air. Elder Yu stumbled backwards. Just as he was about to crash into a wall, a luxurious and jade-like hand firmly supported his back.

Chapter 278: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (6)

A seductive voice started speaking from behind Elder Yu. A smile was playing on the woman's lips but her beautiful eyes were filled with ice.

"Are the members of the Xia Family not aware of showing courtesy as a guest in a master's home?"

Elder Yu's body shook, and turned his head to find a woman with a sweet smile on her face, it seems that... The Ghost Doctor has had a breakthrough?

He felt an unsteadiness in his heart at the thought of this. It's fine that her Ladyship is so exceptional, but how was it that the Ghost Doctor, despite her youth, is still able to surpass him so easily?

This world truly belongs to the young ones now.

"I believe that this lady must be the great Ghost Doctor?"

The middle-aged man retracted his sneer and smiled calmly, "With your rank, you have the right to speak to me."

Edler Yu's face changed instantly. Does this fellow mean that I was not worthy of speaking to him?

This is intolerable bullying!

Realizing that Elder Yu was about to act on his rage, Wei Yiyi squeezed his shoulder tightly and her fox-like, beautiful face began to smile. Her every expression was enough to tug at one's heartstrings.

"My apologies, your position is far too lowly. You have no right to speak to me. Have your Master come and speak with me instead."

"You..." Rage burned in the middle-aged man's heart but in the end, he forced it all down and laughed coldly, "I am here to tell you this; the rumors you've heard are true. Gu Ruoyun has indeed been murdered by the hand of the Xia Family, but not by our Master! I

am here to wash off the injustice towards my Master. The true culprit behind this is Xia Zixi! He is the ringleader, this has nothing to do with my Master!"

The middle-aged man's name is Xia Fan and is a distant relative of the Xia Family. But he was recognized by Xia Qi and employed by the Second Master. His intentions were obvious — to prevent the Ghost Doctor from visiting the Xia Family Estate in Heaven City.

"Oh?"

Wei Yiyi smiled fascinatingly and raised an eyebrow, "You're one of Xia Qi's men?"

Xia Fan's face changed greatly and stared dumbfoundedly at Wei Yiyi's smiling face. Had this woman managed to figure out his identity? Impossible! He may be one of Xia Qi's subordinates but his heart is swelling with loyalty only for the Master!

But how did she find out?

Of course, Xia Fan did not know this but the information network of the Devil Sect now covers every part of the world. Furthermore, Gu Ruoyun is particularly interested in matters concerning the Xia Family. Hence, the Xia Family members are no secret to them.

"So what if I am the Second Master's subordinate?" Xia Fan gritted his teeth and proclaimed, "The Second Master is kind enough to prevent you from taking revenge on the wrong person. Ghost Doctor, the level of your IQ isn't all that low. Surely, you can't be deceived by Xia Zixi and his son!"

Wei Yiyi's gaze darkened, a chill enveloped the smile on her face, "Shopkeeper Zhao, throw him out! Xia Qi's dogs are not welcome in the Hundred Herb Hall!"

"You..."

Xia Fan's expression turned gloomy. He initially thought that this

mission would be a very simple one. As long as the Ghost Doctor believed that the murderer was Xia Zixi, she would be filled with hatred towards Xia Zixi and his son. He did not expect for her to remain so calm.

Unless she does not care whether Gu Ruoyun lives or dies?

"Shopkeeper Zhao, what are you waiting for? Get him out of here!"

Wei Yiyi's smile disappeared and spoke with a bite of impatience.

Shopkeeper Zhao suddenly regained his senses and repositioned himself, requesting Xia Fan to leave. His elderly face said, "Sir Xia, please leave. You are not welcome in the Hundred Herb Hall."

"Great. That's just great!"

Xia Fan fiercely straightened his sleeves and glared sinisterly at Wei Yiyi, "I thought that the Ghost Doctor was a person who valued friendship, yet she is totally unconcerned with the death of her Master. I have a whole new level of respect for you now! But let me tell you this, Xia Zixi's son is now at the borders of Azure Dragon Country. You might still be able to catch up to him! If you let this opportunity slip away, don't regret it. Hmph!"

Chapter 279: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (7)

Once he finished his speech, he left with gloomy eyes and never looked back.

The courtyard was silent now. Elder Yu clenched his fist and spoke with a great fury, "Lady Ghost Doctor, even if you don't intend on avenging our Lady, I won't forgive anyone who dares to harm her and I don't mind crossing the Xia Family! Xia Zixi has murdered her Ladyship, I won't let them get away with this!"

Wei Yiyi shook her head. Her lips smiled, "Elder Yu, please. You've been alive for so many years. Would you immediately believe everything anyone says? They said that our Master is dead? Have you seen it for yourself?"

Elder Yu paused and shook his head, "No."

"If you have not seen it, why would you say that she's dead? I would only recognize it if I saw the body with my own eyes, not by the idle proclamations of others. As long as there is no body, I will not believe it."

"But I'd rather believe it to be true than to believe that it is not. Lady Ghost Doctor, the Master has treated you so well, how could you abandon her? Her Ladyship declared that she would be going to the Xia Household a few months ago and we have not heard from her for so long. She's clearly fallen into the hands of the Xia Family! I am going to capture that Xia Linyu, and force them to return her Ladyship to us."

Wei Yiyi rolled her eyes, completely speechless. She simply could not see any good qualities in this bad-tempered and stubborn old man. After some thought, she threw a letter into Elder Yu's direction.

"What's this?" Elder Yu opened the letter suspiciously and frowned. Once he read the contents of the letter, his originally

angry expression disappeared and was replaced with one of astonishment and pleasant surprise.

"Lady Ghost Doctor, her Ladyship... She's alright?"

"Precisely," Wei Yiyi nodded, "She sent this letter to me and I've only just received it last night. She's informed me that the Young Master of the Xia Family, Xia Zixi is gravely ill, and has asked me to give him treatment. So tell me, why would the Xia Family want to kill her? Besides, I've long known that Xia Qi is not as warm and courteous as he seems. This time, he probably wants to use us as pawns to have Xia Linyu killed. If the Hundred Herb Hall were to murder Xia Linyu, what do you think would happen?"

What could happen?

If Xia Linyu were to die by the hands of members of the Hundred Herb Hall, then the life of her Ladyship who was still residing in the Xia Estate will surely be in jeopardy!

Elder Yu felt a chill from head to toe at the thought of this and shivered.

"What a good strategy to kill two birds with one stone. Xia Qi of the Xia Family is truly a sinister and cunning man. Not only does he want to use us as pawns to get rid of his enemies, he even wants to harm her Ladyship. Fortunately, we were not deceived. Otherwise, the consequences would be unthinkable!"

Wei Yiyi smiled, a cold light flashed across her eyes and she slowly declared, "Since Xia Qi dared to manipulate the Hundred Herb Hall, then he...must pay the price! Elder Yu, I'll leave the matters regarding the Hundred Herb Hall to you. I am going to the Xia Family estate in Heaven City!"

"Lady Ghost Doctor, please be assured. I will not disappoint you."

Elder Yu lightly nodded his head, with an expression filled with worry. If Xia Qi was such a hypocritical and sinister man, then her Ladyship's situation would be quite difficult...

Outside the Hundred Herb Hall, Xia Fan coldly glared at the simple-looking medicinal hall behind him with a sneer.

"Initially, I did not want to utilize the Second Master's last resort. But you've all forced my hand! Since I've already personally come to call on you, then you'd better believe in my words. Who would have known that these people would be so hard to deceive! Since that's the case, then don't blame me for sending a few of my men to impersonate your members of the Hundred Herb Hall and murder the Little Master! Besides, at the end of the day, the relationship between the Hundred Herb Hall and the Xia Family will be shattered. In this collaboration with the Master, both sides will suffer. Under these circumstances, the Young Master will never be able to improve and rise on his own. In the end, the Xia Family shall only belong to the Second Master!"

Chapter 280: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (8)

Of course, Gu Ruoyun was not aware of the incident at the Hundred Herb Hall. She was in the Xia Family Estate, heading towards the outer courtyard when she was blocked by a group of people.

The leader of the group was a man dressed in richly embroidered robes. His eyes examined the young girl in front of him from head to toe. His lips carried a trace of disdain and his chin was raised as if the latter was only fit to gaze upwards at him.

"You're Gu Ruoyun? I think not. The rumors say that you've tamed the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger. And yet, with such majestic Divine Beasts in your hands, how could you possibly be dressed like a stinking merchant? Haha! I reckon that you deliberately sent people out to spread these rumors so that the world would hold you in high esteem and bow before you. I, Xia Ying, have never met such a shameless woman!"

That's right. He believes that this woman is not actually in possession of the Divine Beasts! She must be deliberately creating fantastical airs, simply to convince the world that the Divine Beasts have vowed their loyalty and devotion to her.

He could not understand it. Why would the Master bring such a shameless woman like her into the Xia Family home?

"Step aside!"

Gu Ruoyun frowned and spoke calmly.

"Haha, you'll have to defeat us first if you want us to step aside!" The man in the richly embroidered robes sneered and watched Gu Ruoyun, "If you're a merchant, you're a merchant. No matter how powerful the Hundred Herb Hall becomes, it won't change the nature of merchants! When compared to me, I believe that the Divine Beasts would certainly choose me as long as they aren't

blind! But you're quite good-looking as well, how about you become my concubine? Then I'll swallow the bitter pill and take you in, hahaha!"

The man in the richly embroidered robes laughed again and the people behind him laughed as well.

"Gu Ruoyun, our master is the first distant relative in the Xia Family! His skills are not very far from the direct descendants, following him would be far better than toiling and rushing about."

"Exactly. A woman should look like a woman! Supporting a husband and raising children is what you should do. Otherwise, no one would ever want a woman like you, even if you were gifted on their doorstep as a concubine, let alone becoming a wife! Luckily, our master is kind and is willing to take you in. Lest you are unable to find a man for the rest of your life. Haha!"

"That's right! Since you're going to become our master's concubine, everything you own shall belong to our master. Don't forget to prepare the Hundred Herb Hall as your dowry, it may be filled with a thick stench, but our master will certainly accept it — reluctantly."

The group laughed as if Gu Ruoyun was actually going to marry their master and the Hundred Herb Hall was already in the bag.

Hearing this, Gu Ruoyun did not get angry. She smiled and slowly walked towards the man in richly embroidered robes who stood in front of the group, "You want my Hundred Herb Hall? Well... Then we should see if you have the ability to take it."

The face of the man in richly embroidered robes changed color and he replied coldly, "If you won't do this the easy way, then we'll do it the hard way! If you do not agree to hand over the Hundred Herb Hall today, don't think of ever leaving this place."

"Oh?" Gu Ruoyun raised an eyebrow and smiled, "Since you are all so willing to be used, how can I not agree? If I refuse, am I not

wasting your big talk?"

At that moment, the man in richly embroidered robes' face turned ugly.

She knows that he'd said all of those things in order to force her to act. For if she were to lay a hand on the brothers of the Xia Family, the Master, who was now shielding the girl, will never let her get away with it. Furthermore, she knows that they were sent by the Second Master!

Chapter 281: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (9)

Actually, it was easy to guess the identity of their puppet master. After all, everyone knew that she was brought in by Master Xia himself. If it were not for Xia Qi inciting this movement behind the scenes, they would not have dared to cause trouble...

"Hmph!"

The man in richly embroidered robes scoffed and gritted his teeth, "You don't know what you're saying, Gu Ruoyun. The Xia Family residence has no place for a foul-smelling person like you, unless you surrender the Hundred Herb Hall to me and become my concubine! Otherwise, don't blame me for being discourteous!"

Hua!

The man in richly embroidered robes drew his longsword and charged towards Gu Ruoyun. His cruelty was reflected in his eyes and the sinister smile on his lips showed how much he wanted to send her to hell.

Since the beginning of the altercation, Gu Ruoyun's expression remained unchanged. Her clear, frosty gaze coldly stared at the man charging towards her. Her lips curled into a faint smile.

"Since you've all willingly allowed yourselves to be used by others, then... How could I not satisfy you?"

Hong!

The young girl made one step forward, and suddenly, a strong force erupted from her body and landed heavily like a hammer on the chest of the man in richly embroidered robes. He spat out a mouthful of blood and humiliatingly fell onto the ground.

"You actually raised your hand against me?"

The man in richly embroidered robes laughed coldly, his sinister eyes fixed onto Gu Ruoyun, "Do you know the consequences of

your actions? I may only be a distant relative of the Xia Family, but I am still considered a member of the family. You've raised your hand against me in the Xia Family residence, do you think that the Master would close his eyes to this?"

Gu Ruoyun remained silent and did not speak. She walked towards him and calmly stared at the completely fearless man in richly embroidered robes. She noticed a fleeting smile across the man's eyes.

It was the smile of a person whose conspiracy had prevailed, it was full of complacency.

"Lady Gu, when has this member of the Xia Family offended you? You want to raise a hand against my family member, in my own home?"

As expected, once Gu Ruoyun had made her move, a warm voice appeared from behind. The voice carried a great unhappiness and contained a deep sense of hostility.

"Second Master."

The man in richly embroidered robes looked towards Xia Qi, who was walking towards them. His heart leaped in happiness and quickly said, "Second Master, this woman has spoken rudely about the Xia Family and she's even raised her hand against me, a brother of the Xia Family! She's clearly not happy with the Xia Family, Second Master, please..."

"Pu chi!"

Suddenly, the man spits out a mouthful of blackened blood, spraying it everywhere. He widened his eyes in realization, not daring to believe it as he stared at the slight smile on Xia Qi's handsome face.

That strengthening and vitality pill had been laced with poison! He thought in panic.

The man in richly embroidered robes began to tremble, and his

face slowly turned ashen. Regret and fury intermingled in his eyes, yet he was unable to speak.

Before he had arrived, the Second Master gave him a medicinal pill, saying that it would increase his strength and vitality and that it was his reward!

Who knew that the pill was actually poison!

The Second Master has deceived him...

Peng!

The man in richly embroidered robes staggered in his footsteps and fell hard onto the ground, his eyes filled with dissatisfaction. I've done so much for the Second Master, why does he want to kill me? His heart is truly... evil!

"Xia Ying, Xia Ying what's happened to you?"

The crowd saw Xia Ying's state, and the colors on their faces immediately changed. No one noticed the sinister light that flashed across Xia Qi's face.

If I want to manipulate the old man into destroying Gu Ruoyun, he thought maliciously, merely causing a struggle between the brothers of the Xia Family and the girl would not be enough! Only when a brother of the Xia Family is killed will the Master then destroy his relationship with the Hundred Herb Hall!

Chapter 282: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (10)

"It's you, you must be the one behind this!"

A young girl, who looked to be around the same age as Xia Qi, came rushing out from the crowd and glared angrily at Gu Ruoyun, "You've caused the death of my older brother, you must have done something to him! You've come to our home and killed him wide in the open. The Master will not let you get away with this!"

The young girl's name is Xia Yu and she is Xia Ying's twin sister. She had watched everything unfold from the back. To her, Gu Ruoyun was the only one who was in close proximity to her older brother and therefore she must have done something to his body.

I must report to the Master about this to kill this cruel woman!

Gu Ruoyun watched the scene unfold before her very eyes, unable to act in time. Of course she knew Xia Qi's motives in sending these men. He wanted her to make a move and force the Master's hand!

But she did not expect that Xia Qi would unleash the killer and feed Xia Ying poison from the very beginning!

Even if I did not react, as long as Xia Ying moved towards me, the result would be the same! What a great strategy, to get someone else to do one's dirty work! Unfortunately, he has messed with the wrong person...

"Out of the way!" Gu Ruoyun recovered her sense and ordered with a frown.

"What are you planning to do?"

Xia Yu, realizing that Gu Ruoyun was trying to get close to Xia Ying, fiercely shot her a glare and screamed furiously, "You've already brought harm upon my brother and now he's going to die. You're still not going to leave him in peace?"

Xia Yu was initially unhappy with Xia Ying for listening to the Second Master's orders to cause trouble but if they did not do it, the Second Master would never let them off easily! They were only distant relatives in the Xia Family and had no right to disobey the Second Master's orders.

Who would have thought that this would have brought harm to her brother.

Thinking of how lonely and helpless she would become after her brother's death, tears began to stream down Xia Yu's face. Her face filled with intense hatred towards Gu Ruoyun.

Even if my brother was in the wrong, he does not deserve to be punished with death, how could she kill at will? This woman is utterly merciless, thought Xia Yu.

"If you don't want him to die, then get out of the way!"

Gu Ruoyun wrinkled her eyebrows and spoke calmly.

Actually, she did not want to save Xia Ying. But if she did not cure him from the poison, the members of the Xia Family would assume that she was the one responsible for his death! Hence, she only wanted to use the simplest method to solve the problem.

"Don't even think about it, I won't let you near my brother!"

Xia Yu glared furiously at Gu Ruoyun as she thought, this woman certainly would not have any good intentions, I cannot allow her to inflict further harm upon my brother!

The crease in the space between Gu Ruoyun's eyebrows grew deeper as she watched Xia Ying slowly lose his breath. Just as she was about to step forward, a slow, elderly voice was heard, piercing into the hearts of the crowd.

"What happened here? Can anyone explain this to me?"

Under the remaining light from the sunset, an elder dressed in green made his way towards the crowd. Behind him were the

elders of the Xia Family. But when he saw Xia Ying lying on the ground, the old man's stern expression became flabbergasted, and stared suspiciously at Gu Ruoyun.

"Little girl, can you tell me what's happened here?"

Before Gu Ruoyun could respond, Xia Yu, who was initially crouched on the ground, stood up immediately and rushed towards the old man and threw herself on the ground, kneeling before him. Tears streamed down her face like an endless rain as she sobbed, "Master, you must avenge my brother. This woman has secretly stabbed him in the back! The attitude she displays clearly shows that she has no consideration of the Xia Family in her eyes! Please give us justice in the name of the Xia Family!"

Her petite body trembled, and her pretty, tender face was pale white. Her eyes looked pleadingly at Master Xia. She looked absolutely pitiful.

Chapter 283: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (11)

"What?"

Suddenly, a furious bellow was heard from behind Master Xia and a man in gray robes appeared and rushed forward. He soon reached Xia Ying and quickly raised his hand to check his pulse. He frowned, but a layer of frost masked his elderly features.

"Master, Xia Ying has ingested a deadly poison. There is no cure. He only has an hour left to live."

Elder Huiyi turned towards Master Xia, who remained calm and collected, and explained the situation. Shortly after, he turned towards Gu Ruoyun and glared at her angrily, speaking coldly, "Gu Ruoyun. You've murdered one of the Xia Family in our home. What do you have to say for yourself?"

"You say that I'm a murderer?" Gu Ruoyun smiled calmly, "Do you have proof?"

"Impudence!"

Elder Huiyi grew furious, Xia Ying was one of the most talented among the distant relatives. He has always looked favorably upon him and only needed an opportunity to give the Master his recommendation. He did not expect for this to happen. How could he tolerate this?

Especially since this woman's arrogance pretty much pierced all the way through to the Heavens. She actually dared to commit murder in the Xia Family's residence. Where did she get such ambitiousness and guts?

"Master, we can prove this!"

Hearing this, an assortment of voices came chiming in from the crowd.

"We, along with Xia Ying, were only kindly informing her of the

rules in the Xia Family. Who would have thought this woman was far too arrogant and wielded the fact that she was the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall so she had no need to place the Xia Family her eyes. Furthermore, she raised a hand against Xia Ying, that's probably when she poisoned him!"

"That's right. Everyone here has seen her temperament with their own eyes, she murdered Xia Ying!"

The crowd burst into a discussion, pushing the blame of their intentions to cause trouble onto Gu Ruoyun's shoulders.

"If that was the case, when Xia Ying had raised his hand to strike me, and I was unable to fight back, what would happen then?" Gu Ruoyun smiled calmly. She showed no sorrow over her current situation. Her eyes were clear like water as if they could see through one's soul.

Master Xia's expression turned grave, his dignified gaze now fell upon the kneeling Xia Yu and he asked sternly, "Is the Gu girl speaking the truth? Was Xia Ying the first to strike?"

Xia Yu bit her lip, and softly nodded, "Regarding this matter, brother was the first to commit the wrong. But Gu Ruoyun simply cannot kill him just because he caused trouble for her..."

In that moment, Master Xia grew silent. A short while later, his gaze turned towards Gu Ruoyun and asked, "Little girl, did you poison Xia Ying?"

Gu Ruoyun laughed softly and casually shrugged her shoulders, "What do you think?"

"Hehe," Master Xia chuckled, "I may not know you very well, little girl, but based on what you've done in the past, you're not the kind of person who would willingly suffer a loss! You may have killed many people, but those people deserved to die. You did nothing wrong, so this time I believe that it was not you who poisoned him, someone must have had an ulterior motive. Even if

Xia Ying did offend you, based on your temperament, you would only teach him a lesson, not kill him outright!"

"Master!"

Elder Huiyi's expression changed as he furiously retorted, "How can you bend the law in order to favor an associate? I understand that you're worried over the Young Master's illness and that you would offend the Ghost Doctor if you executed Gu Ruoyun, but showing such blatant favoritism... How many of the Xia Family brothers would feel bitterly disappointed? Furthermore, everyone else would think that they can kill our Xia Family brothers whenever they pleased! In such a situation, how can we maintain our control over Heaven City? Please give justice to the Xia Ying siblings, in the name of the Xia Family!"

Chapter 284: Xia Qi, The Hypocrite (12)

"Please make a fair decision, Master!"

The entire courtyard knelt before him as Elder Huiyi grieved and lamented. If the Master chose to wilfully insist on his way, there would be an upheaval in the Xia Family and the Xia Family cannot bear an upheaval at a time like this.

Master Xia's face turned a few shades darker. Forget about Lord Lingxiao's commands, even if she were not involved in Lord Lingxiao's affairs, he was not going to execute Gu Ruoyun for the sake of curing Xia Zixi's illness.

Furthermore, the Master staunchly believed that Gu Ruoyun would never do such a thing.

"Father!"

Noticing the increasingly ugly shade on Master Xia's face, Xia Qi, who stood beside him, quickly spoke up in a gentle voice, "I also believe that Lady Gu is not a heinous person, except that many people had witnessed the incident. If we do not wash this injustice off her hands, I'm afraid that it would be difficult to convince the masses. So, I have a suggestion - have Gu Ruoyun locked in the dungeon. When we have evidence of her innocence, we shall set her free. What do you think?"

Xia Qi gave a pretty fair suggestion, he was on his father's side and did not believe that Gu Ruoyun would have poisoned Xia Ying. But with so many accusations from so many people, a show of favoritism would sorely disappoint the members of the Xia Family. So it's best to have her locked in the dungeon before making a decision.

Of course, once she was thrown into the dungeon, he would have many ways to have her mysteriously killed off then tell everyone else that she had committed suicide in a bid to escape punishment.

No one would ever suspect it was him!

"No!" Master Xia rejected Xia Qi's suggestion without a second thought and shot him a glare before speaking coolly, "Do not involve yourself in this matter. When has the punishment of criminals in the Xia Family been of your concern? You take care of your own conduct, that's good enough."

Xia Qi's body shook and his hands, hidden in his sleeves, balled up into fists. He took a deep breath and calmed his fury. The warm smile on his face remained unchanged.

"Father, I am merely trying to help you with your worries. Seeing as you are not willing, then I will not speak. Only, if this matter was not properly resolved, many members of the Xia Family will become extremely bitter."

When no one was looking, a sneer appeared on the corners of Xia Qi's lips. But it quickly disappeared and he returned to his warm and courteous facade.

Xia Qi and Dongfang Shaoze both have a similar characteristic. However, Dongfang Shaoze was warm to the bone while Xia Qi's body was made of ice. Underneath his mask of warmth was an undetectable layer of malice.

"I only have one thing to say," Gu Ruoyun looked at Xia Qi, then retracted her gaze and smiled calmly, "Xia Ying has indeed been inflicted with a deadly poison and his time is short. But only I can cure him. If you all insist on dragging this on, it would be impossible to save him. When that happens, do not accuse me of refusing to save a dying man."

Master Xia paused, "Are you saying that you have a cure for Xia Ying?"

"I can only try." Gu Ruoyun shrugged her shoulders and smiled gently, "Aren't you all curious to know who actually poisoned him? Just ask him when he awakens. I believe he probably knows better

than any of you."

"Haha!"

When she finished speaking, the crowd burst into laughter. One Xia Family brother glared at Gu Ruoyun with ridicule, "Gu Ruoyun, we've seen you attack him with our own eyes unless that was a hallucination? I don't think you actually want to save Xia Ying, you want to further shorten his life! Master, this woman cannot be trusted!"

When the brother had finished his jeering, Gu Ruoyun calmly glanced at him, "Don't end up like Xia Ying — being used by another person and ending up dead, without anyone knowing what had truly happened."

Chapter 285: Lingxiao, The Black Tortoise

(1)

"Used? What is the meaning of this?" Master Xia frowned, and subconsciously glanced at Xia Qi.

Does the little Gu girl mean that the provocation from Xia Ying and the rest was because they were being used? And the event behind this poisoning was related to that person?

Xia Qi's heart thumped loudly and his cold eyes, now filled with thick murderous intent, fixed upon Gu Ruoyun. Upon feeling someone else's eyes on him, he quickly retracted the murderous intent in his eyes and put on a warm smile again.

"Stop deluding people with your lies!"

Elder Huiyi glared angrily at Gu Ruoyun, a great blazing fire had ignited in his chest, "If only one person is making accusations towards her, then it might be a lie. But everyone here is a witness, how could they be lying? Women like her are extremely heinous, if you choose to show favoritism, Master, how can you expect for the members of the Xia Family to trust you in the future?"

No matter what, I am going to make the Master execute Gu Ruoyun even if I have to use force. Otherwise, this Xia Family brother would have died in vain!

Gu Ruoyun frowned and calmly sent Elder Huiyi a look, "I don't want to repeat myself. If you want to save him, get out of the way. There may be a tiny sliver of opportunity. The more we delay this, the quicker he will die."

"You..."

Elder Huiyi's face changed greatly and was ready to send his retort...until he heard an elderly yet dignified voice which held unquestionable decisiveness, "Elder Huiyi, step aside!"

"Master!"

Hearing this, Elder Huiyi cried out indignantly. He could not understand why the Master would shield this woman! Such a heinous act would greatly disappoint the Xia Family members.

"Get out of the way!"

Master Xia's tone grew cold and he spoke with such oppression that no one else dared to breathe, "Do not make me repeat myself."

In that instant, Elder Huiyi trembled. He was not satisfied but he had no choice except to step away and could only glare and fume at Gu Ruoyun. If Gu Ruoyun dared to act with killing intent, I will kill her on the spot!

As if she were completely oblivious to his death glare, Gu Ruoyun slowly walked towards Xia Ying and looked with concentration at the man who was lying before her gasping for breath. Then, she produced a porcelain bottle from her sleeve, took out a pill, and put it in Xia Ying's lips.

"What poison are you feeding him with now?"

Elder Huiyi was agitated and indignant, he was about to step forward and stop Gu Ruoyun's actions until the young girl raised her head and glared coldly at him.

One should know that he has already broken through to the rank of a high-level Martial King. But that one look from Gu Ruoyun made him tremble with fear, and his body shuddered.

Is this really an oppression from an eighteen-year-old girl? They've never even felt an aura like this, not even from the Master...

Xia Qi frowned as he stared at Gu Ruoyin and pondered.

Could it be that this woman is truly capable of curing Xia Ying? No! That's impossible! I know my poisons and even I do not have the cure for this. Furthermore, I know that Gu Ruoyun has many

pills on hand, but... No one has ever seen her producing antidotes for poison.

Xia Qi relaxed at the thought. His handsome face maintained his gentle and courteous smile but his eyes never left Gu Ruoyun...

Chapter 286: Lingxiao, The Black Tortoise

(2)

In front of the eyes of the crowd, Gu Ruoyun slowly crouched down. She pinched Xia Ying's lower jaw and placed the pill into his mouth. Then she straightened up and swept her gaze calmly across every face in the crowd.

"As for the truth behind all of this, I'll let him tell you himself."

When she had finished speaking, everyone was shaken and stared at Gu Ruoyun in confusion.

What did she mean? They wondered. Is she really able to cure the poisoned Xia Ying?

At the thought of this, the solemn crowd burst into disbelieving laughter, how could this be possible? Xia Ying had been poisoned by a deadly substance that even if the deity, Daluo, were to arrive, he would not be able to cure him...

Can she do it, simply on the basis that she is Gu Ruoyun?

"Big brother!"

Xia Yu suddenly cried out and when the crowd turned to look, they saw Xia Ying spitting out dark blood. His originally greenish pallor turned white.

"What have you done to my brother this time?"

Xia Yu charged towards Xia Ying's side, she glared furiously at Gu Ruoyun and screamed.

Then, at that moment, a frail voice came from beside Xia Yu, but it was directed towards Gu Ruoyun.

"I'm sorry..."

Even though the poison had seeped deep into his system a while ago, rendering him unable to speak, he was still conscious enough

to witness everything that had happened. When he thought of his actions from the beginning, he wanted to bang his head and die out of embarrassment.

He never imagined that she would disregard their former enmity and save him.

"Big... Big brother."

Xia Yu was shaken and turned her head in disbelief. Her beautiful eyes widened and stared at Xia Ying, who had just opened his eyes. Her voice trembled with emotion, "Big brother, you're alright?"

Xia Ying did not reply, his eyes were filled with guilt. He stood up in front of the crowd, turned to Gu Ruoyun and bowed.

"Lady Gu, I thank you for setting aside our animosity and saving my life. I now know that I have been used as a pawn. Out of fear of being chased out of the Xia Family, I've tried to provoke you into attacking me! But I did not think that he wanted to use me as a sacrifice, to end my life and shift the blame onto you. From the moment I realized that I was poisoned, I've regretted everything."

Xia Ying lowered his head in humiliation. At that time, Second Master's henchmen had come for him and threatened him with chasing both him and his sister out of the Xia Family if he did not agree to the Second Master's request. He knew that the Second Master had the authority to do so! He was only a distant relative. Even though he received some form of appreciation because of his talents, he cannot refuse the Second Master's order.

He did not care if he were thrown out of the family. But this also involved his little sister. Her entire life would be destroyed.

Because of this, he was forced to commit this betrayal.

"Big brother?" Xia Yu was stunned. Her gaze swept through Xia Ying's features, then stopped at Gu Ruoyun's calm expression, "You were not poisoned by this woman?"

But just moments ago, only Gu Ruoyun had been in close

proximity with my older brother, thought Xia Yu in confusion.

Everyone else wanted to know the answer to Xia Yu's question as well. But according to Xia Ying's speech, it would seem that this incident truly had nothing to do with Gu Ruoyun. They had falsely accused her.

"Xia Ying, tell us everything you know."

Master Xia's expression turned grave and he spoke sternly, "Someone has dared to slay his own kin in my territory and has caused an honored guest of the Xia Family to be falsely accused of a crime she did not commit! I will not let him off easily! Furthermore, you have been bewitched into committing a sin that is contrary to one's conscience, you should be punished severely for this. If you reveal the true culprit behind all this, I will be lenient with you!"

Chapter 287: Lingxiao, The Black Tortoise

(3)

After Master Xia's declaration, Xia Ying turned towards Xia Qi's ashen face and spat hatefully, "It was the Second Master! The Second Master forced me into it and he wanted to poison me to death! Master Xia, you must bring justice for me, in my stead!"

If Xia Ying was intact and undamaged, he might still be lying. But he was nearly killed by the master puppeteer and the person who had saved his life was the one whom he had intended to harm. Under these circumstances, he already harbored great hatred towards the man, why would he hide anything?

In that instant, all eyes turned towards Xia Qi.

"Explain yourself. What is the meaning of this?" Master Xia's expression was doleful and solemn and his voice had an unmistakable trace of disappointment.

Even though he already knew that this matter could possibly be related to Xia Qi, when the truth came out he could not stop himself from feeling disappointed.

"All these years, I have been very aware of the things you've done. Initially, I wanted to give you one more chance. But I didn't think that you would do such a thing. What I want to know is this, you do not have any grudges towards the Gu girl, why do you want her dead?"

This was only Xia Qi and Gu Ruoyun's first meeting. There shouldn't be any intention for him to kill the latter. Besides, there was no prior grudge between them.

The absence of past grudges means there could only be one reason.

Gu Ruoyun is the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall and the Master of the Ghost Doctor! And only the Ghost Doctor can cure

the Young Master of his ailment! If Gu Ruoyun were to die in the Xia Family residence, then what would the Ghost Doctor do? Even if she did not rally her forces and mark the Xia Family as an enemy, she certainly would not care for whether the Young Master lives or dies!

But was the Second Master, who had always been as gentle as a breeze, capable of such a malicious and delicate scheme? The crowd then wondered if he could have been hiding his true nature all along.

Xia Qi laughed, and spoke airily like a fresh spring breeze, "Father, you've never trusted me. You've already said it yourself, there is no grudge between us, so why would I want to kill her? There has to be a reason behind this, right? To be honest, I've taken a liking to this little Gu Ruoyun from the moment I met her. I truly admire her, be it her character or her abilities. Such an outstanding woman, what reason would I have to want to kill her? Xia Ying, since you're accusing me of giving the order, you should produce the evidence. Do not make false accusations towards an innocent man."

Hearing this, the crowd looked at each other in dismay. It was Xia Ying who brought them here, no one had known the mastermind behind his crime.

Teng!

Xia Ying raised his head, and glared angrily at Xia Qi, "It was clearly you who sent Sir Yin to pay me a visit and coerced me follow your orders. I was even given a string of strength and vitality pills as a reward. Who would have thought that those pills would turn out to be poison! And now you're still trying to deny your actions?"

He trembled in anger and had completely forsaken the etiquette between seniors and juniors, pointing and screaming furiously at Xia Qi.

"You say that it was I who gave the order, what proof do you have?" Xia Qi sneered, "Yin, show yourself."

Shua!

A black shadow flashed past the crowd like the wind, a pair of cold eyes stared sharply at everyone in the courtyard. When his gaze landed on Gu Ruoyun, his eyes filled with murderous intent.

"Yin, did you give the order to Xia Ying?"

Yin's expression remained unchanged, and coldly replied, "Yes!"

Everyone was flabbergasted as they did not expect for Yin to admit it decisively. Furthermore, Sir Yin was the proudest among the Second Master's subordinates, could it be that the Second Master was actually involved in this matter?

A cold light shot across Xia Qi's eyes, he then spoke coldly, "They are accusing me of giving you the order to do it. Now, you will give my father an explanation."

"I was the one who made the decision in this matter, it has nothing to do with the Second Master. Master, please distinguish between right and wrong with accuracy."

Chapter 288: Lingxiao, The Black Tortoise

(4)

Yin clutched his sword, knelt to the ground, and replied as though he had no fear of death.

He was once an orphan and if it were not for the fact that his master had saved him, he would have long been dead in a foreign land. Now that he had a chance to repay his master's kindness, he was perfectly happy to do whatever it takes.

At this moment, Master Xia's face was as gloomy as a sky filled with dark clouds. He shot a stern glare at the man who knelt before him and bellowed, "Are you certain? You were the only one behind all of this?"

"Yes."

Yin lowered his head, and replied with an icy look in his eyes, "This matter has nothing to do with the Second Master. I, Yin, am willing to accept death!"

"Great, just great! Then I, the Master of this house, would like to ask you this, what grudge have you held against the Gu girl that would cause you to orchestrate her death!" Master Xia spoke with an ashen face and flung his sleeves in fury.

He knew that Xia Qi was somehow involved in this matter but without evidence, as Master of the family, it was hard for him to implicate him. Otherwise, his actions would enrage the entire family, especially since he had just completely disregarded the rules and shielded Gu Ruoyun. Many were already dissatisfied with this decision.

Luckily, Gu Ruoyun really wasn't the culprit behind Xia Ying's poisoning, otherwise, the consequences would have been unthinkable!

Yin sharply replied, "I have no grudge towards her, but I have

been spying on the Hundred Herb Hall for a very long time and have long coveted the Hundred Herb Hall. I did not expect for Xia Ying to be so useless, dying far too slowly. Otherwise, I would have been able to obtain the Hundred Herb Hall when she is dead."

His explanation was reasonable and fair, many strong cultivators would love to spy on the pills from the Hundred Herb Hall. It was not entirely impossible for Yin to think that way.

However, Yin's actions greatly enraged Elder Huiyi, who had nearly made false accusations towards Gu Ruoyun. He flung his sleeves violently and a gust of strong wind was thrown towards the kneeling man.

Yin did not react and allowed the wind to beat against him.

"You dog of a slave! You dare commit such crimes, not only have you cooked up wild schemes, you've dragged your master down with you. What is the use in having a dog of a slave like you? Now, I am going to end you."

Realizing that Elder Huiyi was about to attack again, Master Xia hurriedly cried out, "Hold it! There are many holes in his explanation, wait for me to..."

Pu chi!

The sound of a long sword piercing through the man's chest rang through the courtyard, Master Xia shivered, feeling a great flame bursting through his chest. The sound was like an endless chill, dispersing into a thick cold air.

"Xia Qi, what have you done?"

Xia Qi retracted the chill in his eyes and slowly pulled out the long sword that was lodged into the man's chest. He calmly smiled, "Yin has committed an offense against his superiors. We cannot let him off so easily. Please do not mind us, Lady Gu. The Xia Family has never harbored ill intent towards you."

Master Xia's elderly features darkened in his anger, "Did you not

hear me when I ordered for Elder Huiyi to stop?"

Upon hearing this, Xia Qi raised his head enquiringly, "I heard it. But father, your orders were directed towards Elder Huiyi, were they not? I thought that you had intended for me to punish him myself. So I did it. If I have done wrong, I am willing to accept the punishment. Please do not jeopardize your health with your anger, father."

Seeing the rage on Master Xia's face, Elder Huiyi quickly tried to neutralize the situation, "Master, seeing as the main culprit is already dead, let this matter slide. The Second Master did not mean it. Besides, due to Yin's actions, not only have we created false accusations against an innocent person, we've almost brought harm upon the Young Master. Anyone would have gotten angry at this, the Second Master was probably unable to control his anger and reacted in this manner."

Chapter 289: Lingxiao, The Black Tortoise

(5)

When he thought about how he had been manipulated, Elder Huiyi was enraged. If Gu Ruoyun had ended up dead, the Xia Family could forget about inviting the Ghost Doctor to cure the Young Master's illness. In short, if she dies, the Young Master will also lose his life!

However, ever since the beginning, he never suspected Xia Qi. After all, Xia Qi had never shown any signs of dispute or forcefulness. He always displayed a personality that was content to live a simple life, treating his elder brother and nephews very well. How could someone like him commit such a heinous crime?

"Hmph!"

Master Xia scoffed coldly, he sent a frosty glare towards Xia Qi's direction and said, "Xia Qi, you'd better behave yourself. If I ever find out that you had anything to do with the matters concerning Yu'er and Zixi, I will not let you off!"

After saying his piece, he no longer bothered about what Xia Qi was thinking and turned his head to face Gu Ruoyun, "Little Gu girl, I've initially come looking for you to discuss a certain matter. Who would have thought that such a thing would have happened? Would you be willing to follow me somewhere?"

Gu Ruoyun pondered for a while before she nodded, "Sure, let's go."

Master Xia smiled gently but his face grew stern again when he faced Xia Qi. He spoke coldly, "Do nothing if you wish to remain free of suspicion. Xia Qi, this is my final piece of advice for you!"

Xia Qi watched Master Xia and Gu Ruoyun leave, then smiled.

So, do you think this is the end of it? No! I will destroy the relationship between the Ghost Doctor and the Xia Family! Only

then will that short-lived ghost, Xia Zixi, die even sooner!

...

Inside the warm and comfortable study, one could smell the faint fragrance of books.

Upon entering, Master Xia turned to Gu Ruoyun and said, "Little girl, I know you have many questions. I've brought you here today for only one reason. Our Lord Lingxiao wishes to meet you."

"Lord Lingxiao?"

Gu Ruoyun stared blankly for a moment, then looked suspiciously at Master Xia.

In that instant, the Azure Dragon, who was still inside the phoenix cauldron, began reacting strangely. If he were not guarding Yunyao, who was in the middle of her breakthrough, he would have come charging out.

And if she remembered correctly, it would seem that the name of the Black Tortoise, one of the Four Divine Beasts, was Lingxiao.

"That's right." Master Xia nodded, "The reason why the Xia Family has been able to stand tall without ever crumbling for so many years was because Lord Lingxiao had been watching over us behind the scenes. He would like to meet you. Would you like to follow me and meet him?"

Just a while ago, Lord Lingxiao had telepathically sent him an order to bring Gu Ruoyun to him. Seeing as Lord Lingxiao had made this move, it proved that Gu Ruoyun was indeed in possession of the two Divine Beasts.

After calming the excited Azure Dragon, Gu Ruoyun raised her head to reply but she was interrupted by the crashing sound of someone stumbling in panic into the study.

"Master, something terrible has happened. The Little Master is in trouble!"

"What?"

Master Xia was enraged and pulled the man by his lapels, his elderly face was filled with anger, "What did you just say? Say it again? What's happened to Yu'er?"

"The Little Master he...he's been attacked."

The man replied, completely anxious.

Hong!

A burst of fury erupted from the old man's body, violently slamming against the bookshelves nearby, "I'd love to see which damned fool had dared to lay his hands on my precious grandson, tell me, who did this?"

"It..."

The man sent a careful glance towards Gu Ruoyun, "It was... The members of the Hundred Herb Hall."

The members of the Hundred Herb Hall? Master Xia's rage suddenly disappeared, his startled gaze turned towards Gu Ruoyun. The girl's face resembled that of a demon — absolutely terrifying. It frightened him so much that his heart nearly trembled...

Then, he saw a gust of chilly wind, and the young girl mysteriously vanished. All he could see was a green shadow charging out of the door...

Chapter 290: The Siblings' Reunion (1)

On a small hill, a group of men who were drenched in blood stared vigilantly at another group of men — emitting a strong aura of murderous intent, who tightly encircled the young man and girl in the middle of a formation, full of resolve and totally unafraid of death.

A few years ago, the Master had assigned them to the Little Master and ordered them to follow him like shadows. However, in order to avoid bothering the Little Master, they remained hidden.

Their lives belonged to the Xia Family and if the Little Master was in danger, they will ensure his safety even if it meant sacrificing their lives.

This was their mission!

"Brother Yu."

Luo Li tightly pulled on the sleeves of Xia Linyu's robes, her adorable doll-like features were filled with anxiety. She stole a glance at the young boy whose fair and delicate features remained calm. His clear and shining eyes showed no sign of wavering.

Thinking of Xia Linyu's calm demeanor and of her own cowardice and panic, Luo Li forcibly steadied herself and calmed down.

As long as Brother Yu is here, I'm not afraid of anything, thought Luo Li.

"Xia Linyu, I'd like to see how you're going to escape this time!"

A middle-aged man who led the opposing group laughed. His sharp gaze stared past the guards and straight towards Xia Linyu, "If you would obediently surrender yourselves, I might grant you a quick and easy death."

"Hehe."

The sound of a clear, melodious laugh was heard and the corners of the young boy's lips curled upwards. A smile graced his handsome face while his voice sounded like a clear spring — beautiful and moving, ringing throughout this battle-worn hill.

"I have no hatred towards your Hundred Herb Hall, so why are you here to kill me? You've even sent such a large amount of troops."

"Haha!"

The middle-aged man laughed, "What an ignorant little boy! It is simply because of the fact that you are the Little Master of the Xia Family that you must be punished with a thousand deaths! The Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun was my foster daughter. And she has been captured by your Xia Family! As her adopted father, I'm going to avenge her!"

Xia Linyu's face changed. His mind drowned out everything else in the man's speech, except for one particular sentence.

Gu Ruoyun is in the Xia Family Estate! She is at the Xia Family home!

Could it be that Grandfather had done something to her and caused the Hundred Herb Hall to dispatch its forces?

Xia Linyu panicked at the thought of this, his mannerism changed immediately, "You say that Gu Ruoyun is at the Xia Family home? Has something happened to her? This won't do. I need to return home!"

Yes, I must hurry home! Otherwise, knowing Grandfather's stubborn nature, what would happen if he raised his hand against her?

"Brother Yu..."

Luo Li bit her lip, feeling as if a needle had pierced into her heart. It was extremely hurtful.

When faced with danger, he never lost his head.

Even when there was no escape, he was fearless.

But at this very moment, Luo Li could see the dread and tension in Xia Linyu's eyes.

Just who is this woman they call Gu Ruoyun? I've known Brother Yu ever since we were children, but I've never heard of her name before. How is she able to cause such a huge reaction in Brother Yu?

"Hmph!"

The middle-aged man scoffed coldly, "Gu Ruoyun is already in the hands of your family. Do you think we'd let you get away? You will die here today! I'll have my revenge and wipe up this grudge!"

By now, Xia Linyu had stopped listening to everything else. All he knew was that Gu Ruoyun was in danger and that he must hurry back to the Xia Family home to save her! Hence, he lost all sense of rationality. Otherwise, he would probably be questioning the middle-aged man who has claimed to be Gu Ruoyun's foster father.

Chapter 291: The Siblings' Reunion (2)

After all, everyone knew that Gu Ruoyun had accepted the Ghost Doctor as her disciple, but no one has ever heard of her having a foster father! Furthermore, what's so great about this man that she would agree to become his adopted daughter?

"Trying to escape?"

Realizing that Xia Linyu was trying to leave, the middle-aged man scoffed coldly and his body turned into a stream of energy as sharp as a sword, charging towards the boy. In that instant, an infinite amount of murderous intent came bursting from his body.

"Xia Linyu, you will die now!"

Hong!

The stream of sharp, sword-like wind was abruptly cut off, and dust flew everywhere, scattering across the land. A grey-robed elder huffed and puffed, and a bloody gash appeared on his forehead. Fresh blood trickled down onto his face.

"Uncle Ling!"

Xia Linyu turned his head to witness the scene, his pupils narrowed, and he charged wildly towards Xia Ling.

Uncle Ling has watched over me since I was a child, he thought, I may not be the original owner of this body, but how could I stand by and watch while such a loyal, elderly servant sacrifices himself for me?

"Little Master, do not come any closer!"

Uncle Ling raised his hand and barred Xia Linyu from going any further. He raised his head, as if he were facing death with equanimity, and spoke firmly, "Take Lady Luo and leave this place immediately, get back to the Xia Family home and send help! We will be saved when the strongest men of the Xia Family come to

our aid! Little Master, you are the hope of the Xia Family. Even if we all die here, you cannot die!"

"Uncle Ling..."

Xia Linyu's thoughts were shaken, his clear eyes were now bloodshot. He raised his delicate face and stared expressionlessly at the middle-aged man, who was laughing sinisterly.

"Uncle Ling, do you really think I can leave now? Unless... This man is dead."

"Haha, even if you have self-assurance, my attack was blocked by this old fart. Who can save you this time? Die, Xia Linyu!"

Hong!

The middle-aged man threw his head back and laughed as a great energy appeared all over his body. Under his strong coercion, Xia Linyu felt his footsteps tremble but he stood strong in the end.

His frame was small, so delicate and graceful that he did not look like a boy. But now he was standing, rooted to the ground, and was not overwhelmed by the man's coercion.

He had bitten his lips so hard that it was now bleeding. His fresh blood drenched his entire mouth and the strong smell of blood filled his nostrils.

A Martial King! He thought. Is this the true strength of a Martial King?

No!

I must not die here. Otherwise, how can I grow strong and protect my beloved sister?

"You're still pretty strong!"

The middle-aged man laughed coldly, "Even so, you shall die today!"

A gloomy and cold aura enveloped Xia Linyu and the middle-aged

man's stern face was filled with a sinister smile. Then, like a flash of lightning, his body turned into a blurry streak, the sword in his hands gleamed with its sharp edges and cold steel, it was aimed straight towards Xia Linyu's throat.

"Brother Yu, watch out!"

"The Little Master! Quick, protect the Little Master!"

In that moment, the complexion on everyone's faces was the same. But under the strong pressure of a Martial King, none of them could make any move. They stared in horror and despair as the sharp end of the sword drew closer and closer to the Little Master's throat.

Luo Li cried out in anguish, wishing that she could dart forward and take the stab in his place. But no matter how much she tried, she could not move.

Xia Linyu's expression remained the same since the very beginning. His eyes stared calmly at the sword with a bitter smile on his face.

"Big sister, I was a good-for-nothing in our past life, and you have constantly exhausted your efforts for my sake... You even traveled everywhere to become an apprentice to great doctors, all because of the condition of my body. You've worked towards such a high level in medicine simply to find me a cure. All those years, you've suffered so much for my sake and endured many hardships. Every time I was bullied, you would always protect me, and teach those bullies a lesson for me."

Chapter 292: The Siblings' Reunion (3)

"In this life, I'm finally no longer a good-for-nothing. I can cultivate now and use my own strength to ensure your safety. But my time was short. Too short."

"It has only been four years since I had been reborn into this body, and in those four years... The time has passed too quickly. I have not grown powerful enough, I am not at a level where I would fear no one."

"I really miss you, big sister..."

Why? He lamented. I have received the chance to be reborn with great difficulty, why am I only given a period of four years? During my time in these four years I've never stopped cultivating, all for the sake of one day achieving the ability to protect her!

In these four years, he has endured many hardships all for the sake of his cultivation. But the Heavens now wish to end his life just like that. Not only has he lost the opportunity to protect her, he even...never had the chance to see her.

Xia Linyu gently closed his eyes and a tear fell from the corner of his eye. Has he not persevered these four years all for the sake of his beloved sister? If it were not for her, he would not have been able to hold on for so long...

Suddenly, the chill in his surroundings dissipated and Xia Linyu's body began to shake. He slowly opened his eyes to see a flash of green robes.

The young girl grabbed the middle-aged man's sword firmly. Her clear eyes were emotionless, staring coldly at the man before her.

A cool breeze brushed against her long black hair.

Upon seeing the young woman's face, Xia Linyu's expression changed from astonishment to excitement. His eyes were now fixed upon the young woman.

She's so like her! He thought. This young girl looked as if she had been cast from the same mold as his older sister. Could it be that she is truly the one that he'd been missing all these years?

"Who are you?" came the middle-aged man's cold inquiry. His face remained expressionless, "If you're only a passerby, mind your own business. You have no right to interfere in the matters of the Hundred Herb Hall."

"Oh?"

Gu Ruoyun was smiling, yet it was not a smile, "You're a member of the Hundred Herb Hall?"

If Wei Yiyi were here, she would certainly look at the middle-aged man with derision. She has never seen such a delusional man, daring to ask the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall herself to butt out of the matters of the Hundred Herb Hall.

"That's right!"

The middle-aged man squinted his eyes and a cold smile hung on his lips.

"I am the foster father of Gu Ruoyun, who is the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall. You should also know that the Hundred Herb Hall currently commands the attention of the world. If you don't intend on provoking us, you'd better mind your own business!"

He could see that this woman's powers are at the rank of a Martial King and such abilities are rather shocking in someone as young as her. But so what? He's currently masquerading as the foster father of the Hundred Herb Hall's Master. He was sure that this woman would not want to provoke such a powerful organization.

After all, many people who wished to purchase the pills from the Hundred Herb Hall now owe them favors instead. The Hundred Herb Hall only needs to summon them and many would fight to come to its aid.

"You say that you're Gu Ruoyun's foster father?" Gu Ruoyun smiled, "I've never recognized a foster father like you."

"Of cour..."

Before he could finish speaking, the middle-aged man's eyes widened and stared at the pure and beautiful face of the woman before him in astonishment.

"You... You are..."

Gu Ruoyun snorted and laughed, she raised her eyebrows and chided, "You call yourself my foster father, yet you don't even know who I am? What kind of a foster father are you?"

Hua!

The middle-aged man turned pale and his eyes widened in shock.

Gu Ruoyun, how could she be here? Who sent this information to the Xia Family?

Chapter 293: The Siblings' Reunion (4)

The middle-aged man quickly steadied himself and fiercely replied, "Lies! How dare you, just who do you think the Master of the Hundred Herb Hall is? Did you think that she could be easily impersonated by a person like you? This is a crime that should be punished by a thousand deaths! Guards, take her away."

According to rumors, Gu Ruoyun was only a high-level Martial General. This woman was clearly a Martial King and hence, she could not possibly be Gu Ruoyun.

Seeing as he had easily masqueraded as her foster father, it's plausible that someone else would be able to impersonate her as well.

Gu Ruoyun calmly swept her gaze across the advancing men who were surrounding her, everyone immediately felt as if their brains had exploded and their minds went blank.

Then, the young woman's clear and calm voice was heard throughout the hill.

"Yunyao, since you've awakened, I'll leave these people to you now."

Wha... What? Everyone had regained their senses and heard her words. Before they could react, they heard a loud roar piercing through the quiet hill. They turned their heads to find a beautiful and graceful white tiger appearing out of thin air.

Yunyao's body gradually grew before their very eyes and was enveloped by a layer of white celestial light. Her long black hair was like a cascading waterfall and her robes were a beautiful shade of lily-white. A small smile hung on her extremely beautiful face, she looked like a true aristocrat, graceful and elegant.

"Simply an insignificant mid-level Martial King, yet he dares to act with such arrogance!"

Yunyao smiled faintly and slowly approached the Middle-aged man, "Furthermore, you've had the gall to claim yourself to be my Master's foster father! My Master holds a rather prestigious position, yet a man like you dares to offend her? Seeing as you've made such an unforgivable mistake, then... You should bear the consequences."

This man dared to masquerade as my Master's foster father, what an insult! Yunyao thought. She is the Master of the great White Tiger, how could she possibly have such a revolting foster father? This was unforgivable!

Roar!

An angry growl escaped from Yunyao's beautiful lips, causing the entire landscape of the hill to tremble. Then, an infinite amount of white light gathered within her body and bubbled towards the crowd.

The white light enveloped their shocked and horrified faces, covering everyone entirely.

Then, the world was finally quiet!

No one was sure what had happened to the attackers but all of them were now dead and gone, not even their bones remained.

Yunyao turned around and her graceful figure strolled towards Gu Ruoyun. She went down on one knee, with one hand resting on it. Her eyes displayed great gratitude, "I thank you, Master, for saving me. I am truly grateful. If it were not for you, I would never have broken through to the rank of a high-level Martial King."

At the beginning, Yunyao had stayed out of fear of Zixie's great powers until she finally had her breakthrough, she was entirely grateful towards Gu Ruoyun.

If it were not for her she might have had to wait a hundred years before breaking through, and she might not even have managed to find Tianqiong.

"Yunyao, you can go back for now."

Gu Ruoyun waved her hand and put Yunyao away. She turned to face the startled young boy with a big smile on her lips and addressed him in a familiar manner that only Xia Linyu would recognize.

"Yu'er, long time no see."

Seeing the expression on Xia Linyu's face in that moment, Gu Ruoyun was able to confirm the boy's true identity.

After taking a large detour, she has finally reunited with him...

Chapter 294: The Siblings' Reunion (5)

Xia Linyu stared foolishly at the face that he had yearned for day and night, and momentarily lost all of his senses. He was afraid that this was a hallucination; once he touched it, the person before him would disappear once again.

For over four years, this illusion had appeared before his eyes far too often. And now that the other person has truly appeared before him, he could not believe it...

Was it really her? He wondered. Big sister... She's still alive? She was able to escape and be reborn, together with me?

In that moment, he began to recall the moment of his death and the immense sorrow on his sister's face. At that time, he did not fear death and if it were not for his sister, who constantly risked her life to protect him, he probably would have been killed many times over.

His greatest worry was that once he died, his sister would be all alone...

"Yu'er, are you not happy to see me?" Receiving no reaction from Xia Linyu, Gu Ruoyun smiled.

Her question seemed to pull Xia Linyu back to reality. He threw himself onto Gu Ruoyun, his frail body somehow gathered immense strength and pushed the young girl a few steps back. His arms held her tightly and in that moment, tears streamed down his face like rain, staining the young boy's delicate face.

"Sister, I've missed you, I've missed you so much..."

It's been four years, he thought. I've finally managed to meet her. This time, we will not be apart, no matter what!

Luo Li remained behind the two, staring in a daze at their embrace. Suddenly, she felt sour and unbearably nervous. Ever since Brother Yu woke up four years ago, he had treated everyone

with indifference, aside from Master Xia and the Young Master. He rarely placed anyone with importance.

However, even so, he rarely showed his true nature in front of Master Xia and the Young Master.

Only now did Xia Linyu show a side of himself that Luo Li has never seen before.

Logically speaking, the special place held by this woman in Xia Linyu's heart should have made Luo Li feel jealous. However, when she thought of how Xia Linyu would have died if she did not appear, Luo Li could not bring herself to hate her.

Because Gu Ruoyun had saved Xia Linyu!

Because of this, she could not hate her.

"Yu'er, I'm sorry. I arrived a little late."

Gu Ruoyun lowered her gaze and a murderous intent flashed briefly across her eyes.

In her past life, she was unable to protect her brother and witnessed him being mutilated alive. She herself then ended up dying a hateful death.

And in this life, I nearly lost him. I must not let this happen again! She thought.

No matter who I am faced with, if they dared to lay a single hand on him, I will make them... Regret!

"Brother Yu."

Luo Li suppressed the sourness in her heart and walked towards Xia Linyu. She smiled sweetly at Gu Ruoyun, "Is this elder sister the one whom you've been looking for? The Master of the Hundred Herb Hall, Gu Ruoyun? If this is true, then we have hope in saving Uncle Xia. Let's go home."

"That's right."

Xia Linyu suddenly remembered his bedridden father, he pulled Gu Ruoyun's hand urgently and pitifully requested, "Sister, will you help me save my father? He's been taking care of me all these years. Even when I was unable to cultivate he never turned his back on me. I... I don't want him to die."

In his past life, he had never experienced the love of a father. It was in this life that he now knew the true meaning of a father's love.

A father's love means that he would shield you no matter what, like a big tree that shelters you during a storm, protecting you under his wing. Hence, Xia Linyu did not want to lose his present life father, no matter what.

"Very well."

Gu Ruoyun nodded, "The Ghost Doctor is on her way and will be reaching her destination soon. When she arrives, she will be able to save the Young Master of the Xia Family. Yu'er, for your sake, I will not let him die."

Chapter 295: The Siblings' Reunion (6)

At the courtyard of the Xia Family Estate.

The Master paced back and forth anxiously, occasionally raising his head towards the gate, his face displayed great nervousness and worry.

"The Gu girl has personally gone off to take care of the matter so there should not be any issues. Even if the opposition is not a member of the Hundred Herb Hall, she should be able to protect Yu'er, based on her capabilities..."

But the Master could not understand this — how was Gu Ruoyun so enraged upon hearing that something had happened to Xia Linyu? Did they know each other?

Thinking of this, Master Xia chuckled and shook his head.

Yu'er has never left Heaven City ever since he was a child so how could he have met her? It's probably because she had heard that this was caused by the members of the Hundred Herb Hall. That's why she was so angry.

Besides, anyone would be enraged if a person masquerades as a member of one's organization and committed crimes under their name...

"Don't worry, Master. I'm sure that the Little Master is fine." Elder Huiyi assured him.

After everything that has happened, he would not arbitrarily push the blame onto Gu Ruoyun. Even if the opposition was utilizing the good name of the Hundred Herb Hall, it might simply be a big misunderstanding.

All will be revealed when they return.

Just as they were talking about this, Master Xia noticed the pair, chatting happily with each other. His eyes widened.

What... What is this? He wondered.

One should know that ever since Xia Linyu had recuperated from his illness, he would only ever smile in front of Master Xia and Xia Zixi. So what's up with the happiness on his face? Has something that he had been unaware of happened? That's very possible!

Master Xia blinked, and his eyes darted back and forth. He's taken a great liking towards Gu Ruoyun and if she ended up with his own grandson, he would be ecstatic.

"Haha."

Master Xia laughed at the thought of this and made his way towards Gu Ruoyun and Xia Linyu. His old eyes observed them both as he laughed heartily, "Yu'er, you seem to be alright. And you're already acquainted with the Gu girl..."

Xia Linyu's face darkened, the look on Master Xia's face has revealed his true intentions.

Even though he and Gu Ruoyun had been reborn at the same time, deep down, they were flesh and blood. If the situation played out according to Master Xia's intentions, then wouldn't it be... Incestuous?

"Grandfather, don't concern yourself with such matters," Xia Linyu rolled his eyes, "I'm going to see father."

He then pulled Gu Ruoyun's hand and led her to the back of the courtyard.

Master Xia was in a daze and staring blankly at the young man. He turned his head in astonishment to Elder Huiyi, "Did he just roll his eyes at me?"

Elder Huiyi nodded, "It would seem so, Master..."

Hearing this, Master Xia began to cry profusely, "After so many years, Yu'er is finally acting like a normal person! He has always been a quiet child due to the condition of his frail body. Even after

his recovery four years ago, he hardly ever showed his true feelings. Usually, if he wasn't cultivating, he would be daydreaming. Now he's finally able to express himself..."

Master Xia wailed and wiped his eyes with his sleeves. Only the Heavens knew how much hurt he had felt at the sight of his grandson's condition. Now he's finally acting like an actual human being.

Of course, if Xia Linyu knew what Master Xia was thinking, he probably would have the urge to smack the old man.

Indeed, in the eyes of this old man, was he not human?

Chapter 296: The Siblings' Reunion (7)

"However, I can now relax under these circumstances. I am tired, I'm going to rest now."

Master Xia sighed as he stared reluctantly at Xia Linyu before leaving in the opposite direction. But in contrast with his earlier tense mood, the old man's face was now filled with smiles.

Not too far away, Xia Qi's gloomy face stared coldly at the group from a distance. His eyes held a poisonous hatred and murderous intent.

He's still alive! He thought viciously. Those useless bastards, they've allowed the son of a bitch, Xia Linyu to walk home alive. They can't even take care of one small matter, what's the use of having them around?

Xia Qi shook his sleeves fiercely at the thought of this, he then turned and left with a darkened face.

...

It was very difficult for the siblings to finally meet. So naturally, they had a lot to tell each other. But before they could finish their conversation, Master Xia had sent his servants with an invitation for Gu Ruoyun.

Remembering the earlier information that she had received from Master Xia, Gu Ruoyun bid farewell to Xia Linyu for the time being and headed towards the study.

At this moment, Master Xia was standing with his hands clasped behind his back in the study with his back facing the door. Sensing a soft movement behind him, he turned and smiled at Gu Ruoyun.

"Little Gu girl, do you remember our discussion? Would it be alright if you could follow me to meet Lord Lingxiao?"

"Sure."

Gu Ruoyun gently nodded her head, "Yun Yao, Tianqiong, you should come along too."

Hua!

Once she had spoken, two shadowy forms, one white and one green, materialized from behind Gu Ruoyun and turned into two figures standing next to the young girl.

The white-robed Yun Yao looked as elegant and graceful as a chrysanthemum flower and a fair smile hung on her incomparably beautiful face. Her gorgeous eyes were like limpid pools of black water, she was an absolutely moving and thrilling sight to behold. The Azure Dragon was dressed in azure-colored robes, looking handsome and sophisticated. His only imperfection was his blinded eyes, which were dark and expressionless.

"So these two are... Lady White Tiger and Lord Azure Dragon?"

Master Xia was startled. Having one divine beast in the Xia Family could preserve the family name for generations, yet this girl has two.

"Master Xia, please lead the way." Gu Ruoyun smiled and replied.

Master Xia was abruptly brought back to his senses and made an inviting gesture, "Little Gu girl, please follow me. I'll take you to Lord Lingxiao."

Hearing this, Yun Yao and Tianqiong grew extremely excited. They did not expect to find the Black Turtle, Lingxiao, so quickly!

At this rate, they would only need to find the Vermillion Bird to complete the four friends!

...

In a secret chamber, the walls were decorated with pictures of the Four Divine Beasts. The details of the artwork were amazing and very life-like.

Deep within the chamber, an elderly man clad in green robes sat

cross-legged with his eyes closed on a stone pedestal. The old man was extremely good looking. There was not a single wrinkle on his face*. If it were not for his white hair and beard, no one would suspect that he was an elderly man.

As if sensing two familiar auras approaching him, the elderly man opened his eyes and his lips twitched. His eyes fixed firmly on the doorway of the stone chamber.

Suddenly, a shock of white silk entered, followed closely by a man in azure robes. The old man suddenly grew very excited.

"Leader, Yunyao!"

His ancient voice was filled with excitement and his eyes lit up, fixed squarely upon the pair.

"Lingxiao, it really is you."

Yunyao's heart leaped as she rushed towards Lingxiao, "You... What happened to you? How did you become this way? Furthermore..." Yunyao asked suspiciously as she gazed upon Lingxiao's snow-white hair and beard with a blank expression.

Chapter 297: The Siblings' Reunion (8)

"Young man, could you leave us for a moment? I want to speak with them."

Lingxiao wrinkled his eyebrows and spoke hesitantly, glancing at Master Xia who stood at the doorway.

Master Xia, on the other hand, realized that there was no anger in Lingxiao's voice and replied respectfully, "Acknowledged."

He then left immediately, leaving the space to Gu Ruoyun and the rest.

"Lingxiao, you can speak freely now. What happened to you?" Tianqiong frowned. Even though he can't see his surroundings, he could tell that something had befallen Lingxiao based on Yunyao's tone of voice.

Lingxiao sighed, "Years ago, when the three of you were mortally wounded, only I escaped heavy injury. But even so, my powers have degenerated to the rank of a Martial Honor! Those people had used a rune to seal me in here, never to leave for all eternity. If I take one step out of this place, they will sense my departure and all of us will be in danger! Coincidentally, not too long after, a man by the surname of Xia brought his wife and children to live in this area. So I've asked him to help me find your whereabouts. In exchange for this, I have agreed to help them in resisting any enemies that come their way! Even though I am unable to leave this place, the coercion of a Martial Honor has helped him in scaring off many people."

"After that, many years passed and the Xia man has long passed on. But his descendants have remained here. They have all inherited their ancestor's mission and have constantly been searching for my friends! In this rune, even though my looks have not changed but my body has aged. And soon, I might die. Leader, Yunyao, I've searched for you to ask you how you're doing. But I

cannot leave with you. Unless... Someone can help me break this seal."

Yunyao finally understood why Lingxiao's hair and beard had turned white, even his voice sounded ancient.

It was due to the power of the rune.

This won't do! She won't allow her lifelong friend to die of old age just like that.

"Master, is there anyway, oh right, Lord Zixie will surely have an idea. Master, I beg you, please ask Lord Zixie to save Lingxiao."

Yunyao knelt in front of Gu Ruoyun and pleaded. She gazed at the young woman as her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

Gu Ruoyun paused in thought then slowly replied, "Zixie has informed me that the level of power in this rune is far too strong. With the current level of his strength, he cannot help. You might have to wait a while before we can destroy this rune."

Yunyao's eyes sparkled, "That means, Lord Zixie has a way? It's only a matter of time?"

"Mm. As long as he can hold up until the time is right."

Hearing this, Yunyao hurriedly turned to Lingxiao, "Lingxiao, did you hear that? My Master can save you so you must hold on. There must be four of us, we will not lose you!"

Lingxiao smiled bitterly and shook his head, he has persevered for so many years and now his body is reaching its limit. He cannot hold on for very much longer.

But at least before I die, I'd get to see my closest companions one last time, he thought. That was enough.

The most unfortunate thing was that the absence of the Vermillion Bird...

"Lingxiao," Tianqiong's voice was just as domineering as it had been in the past, but when he was with his longtime companion, it

carried a hint of gentleness, "Would you happen to know of the Vermillion Bird's whereabouts?"

Chapter 298: The Siblings' Reunion (9)

Lingxiao shook his head, "I do not know where the Vermillion Bird is. All I know is that she was not on this mainland."

Not on this mainland?

Tianqiong frowned before finally relaxing after a long pause, "No matter where she is, we must find her! By then, you must go forth with us to the other mainland! Lingxiao, if you still consider me as your leader, then you must listen to me! You have to hold on, we will not give up on you, and you must not give up on yourself. Otherwise, you're not fit to be our companion."

Lingxiao's body trembled, he raised his head to gaze upon Tianqiong's handsome, emperor-like face and dominating aura, he smiled bitterly, "Leader, if I am able to hang on, I will persevere."

For their sake, I will work hard, he thought.

But after the passing of so many years, his lifespan was at its end.

Originally, the lifespan of a Divine Beast can last for a very long time, especially since he is the Black Tortoise. But in this rune, he was only an average Martial Honor. His life was at an end, and his powers would not return.

"Yunyao."

Gu Ruoyun took out a porcelain bottle from her lapel, carefully poured out a pill and gave it to Yunyao, "This Longevity Pill was refined for human consumption. The body structure of a spiritual beast and a human may not be the same, but this rune has already rendered the Black Tortoise's physical condition into that of a human's. This coincidence has provided the opportunity to utilize this pill. Give this to him, and he will be able to live on for another ten more years."

To her, ten years would be enough time.

"Very well."

Yunyao's heart felt great joy, she suppressed her excitement and placed the pill in front of Lingxiao, "Wait for us, Lingxiao. We'll come back and save you."

Lingxiao stared at the pill in amazement, then turned towards Gu Ruoyun and spoke hoarsely, "Thank you, it is indeed a great fortune for my Leader and Yunyao to have met you. If I am able to finally leave this rune, I will willingly follow you as well."

The prerequisite for this was if he could leave this place and reclaim his freedom...

"Tianqiong, Yunyao. It's been a long time since you've all been together. You must have a lot to catch up on. I'll wait for you outside."

Gu Ruoyun looked at them then turned and left the stone room with her heart feeling as heavy as a large stone.

At the height of their strength, the Four Divine Beasts were unstoppable. Yet someone had been able to inflict serious damage on all four of them until even the Black Tortoise was unable to escape and is living in fear of attracting their attention.

So... Just how powerful is this person?

"Little girl."

In that moment, Zixie's demonic voice rang out from within her soul, "These are matters beyond your imagination. The world is huge, so huge that even a few years would not be enough for you to travel around it. There are far too many cultivators in this world, too many to even be counted. The ones you've met in your past life were equivalent to one hair from nine oxen. Wait until you're strong enough. Then your knowledge will grow. But when that happens, the enemies you meet will only grow more powerful. You.. Can you prepare yourself for the answers?"

Gu Ruoyun was silent. After a short pause, she smiled gently, and

a sense of resolve shone in her clear eyes.

"If the only way to protect my loved ones is to stand at the pinnacle of power, then I do not mind to cut my way through the thistles and thorns along the way. So what if the path is ridden with bloodshed? Zixie, no matter how difficult and dangerous the road ahead may be, I must continue my path. Because there are people who need my protection."

Since the beginning, she had been well aware that the path she has chosen would not be an easy one. But so what? She thought. Even if I have to crawl, I will crawl my way up to the seat of supremacy.

So none shall dare to lay a finger on my loved ones!

Chapter 299: The Siblings' Reunion (10)

The voice from within her soul paused for a long while before speaking again.

"Little girl, no matter the trials and tribulations you may face in the road ahead, I will be with you every step of the way just as I've once promised you! As long as I'm alive, not one of your loved ones will die."

"Zixie..."

Gu Ruoyun felt touched and she smiled softly, "Thank you."

"Why should there be a need for thanks between the two of us? If you really want to thank me, I won't mind accepting your body as your way of thanks. After all, the areas that should be larger should be all grown out by now. How about we have a discussion on life's pleasures?"

The man's tone of voice was rather dubious and caused Gu Ruoyun, who was initially feeling very touched by his words, to instantly go very dark in the face. She took a deep breath and gritted her teeth, "Zixie, would it kill you to stop taking liberties with my body?"

"It would."

"..."

Gu Ruoyun was seriously speechless. She immediately blocked out the voice within her soul then marched straight into the guest room.

From afar, she noticed a figure approaching the door of her room. She frowned lightly and asked, "Can I help you?"

"Ah?"

Xia Yu nearly jumped out of her skin. She turned her head and saw Gu Ruoyun, then spoke shyly, "Lady Gu, I'm here to

apologize."

"Oh."

Gu Ruoyun calmly replied, "So can you leave now?"

Earlier, her motives in saving Xia Ying was to prove her innocence and not because she had a good impression towards the siblings.

"I..." Xia Yu bit her lip, "Actually... I know that my brother and I both made a very grave mistake. In the Xia Family, it doesn't really matter how gifted we are... We will only ever be distant relatives and can never compare with the direct descendants. In all respects, we have been patient and accommodating, but so what? We would only aggravate the rest. The Second Master himself does not hold a lot of influence in the Xia Family but he has many strong cultivators as subordinates and is a trueborn son of the Master. If we refuse his order, he would chase us out of the Xia Family. So we had no choice but... But to commit such a heinous crime."

Xia Yu explained the situation in a single breath, then continued, "Lady Gu, I know that I am acting shamelessly by begging for your forgiveness, but my heart will never rest until I receive your forgiveness... Which is why I have shamelessly paid you a visit."

"Are you done?" Gu Ruoyun replied curtly, she then took two steps towards Xia Yu, "Can one simply plant false evidence against another all for the sake of remaining in the Xia Household? You should be quite clear of the consequences if the incident today was committed by someone else! And now, you've come asking for my forgiveness just so that you can clear your own conscience? Well, let me make one thing very clear, I do not hate you, neither do I blame you. You are all strangers to me, so I don't have the right to control what you do, and there is no need to discuss forgiveness. Well then, can you leave now?"

It's true, no matter what the Xia Ying siblings have done, Gu Ruoyun would feel no anger. Because to her, they are only a pair of

insignificant strangers.

There is no need for her to waste her time on them.

"Lady Gu..." Xia Yu's eyes grew red as she replied timidly, "Are you really not going to forgive me? I'll do anything, as long as I can receive your forgiveness."

Gu Ruoyun waved her hand and said, "You don't need to do anything, just don't trouble me in the future."

Then, she pushed open the bedroom door, and shut Xia Yu outside, cutting herself off from her pitiful yet beautiful tear-stained face.

Chapter 300: The Siblings' Reunion (11)

Xia Yu watched as the door slammed in her face. In that instant, she knew that she had indeed committed a grave mistake and no matter what she did, she could never make up for it. If she could do it all over again, they would never have listened to Xia Qi.

Unfortunately, this time, no matter how much regret she felt, it would be useless.

...

High above the skies, amid swirling white, fluffy clouds, there's a land like a paradise on earth.

It was the Weapon Refining Sect. A woman in snow-white robes was standing, facing downwind. Her robes fluttered gently, like a fairy, pure and otherworldly. She quietly stood amongst the clouds with her beautiful face fixed in concentration.

Behind her, Leng Yanfeng stared foolishly at the floating, incomparably beautiful, fairy-like woman. His cold eyes filled with longing.

But when he remembered his current situation, his vision became clouded with gloom.

If it were not for that person, I would not have become handicapped! I can't even express my feelings to the woman I love!

Even though he had not been able to identify the culprit's face, he has long held a bone-deep hatred towards him. He hated him so much that he wished that he could flay the skin off the man!

And Gu Ruoyun... That woman has actually managed to destroy Azure Dragon Country! If he could, he would make her suffer a terrible penalty!

The more he thought of this, the thicker the murderous intent in his body grew. But whenever he looked at the woman in front of

him, the anger in his gaze would dissipate and his handsome face turned soft and gentle.

"Junior sister, Elder Zhao of the Xia Family has arrived and requests for an audience."

Elder Zhao of the Xia Family? Shiyun frowned, then relaxed her expression. She turned around to look at the man and flashed him a gentle smile, "Anyone who comes here is our guest, senior brother. Please invite him in."

The Weapon Refining Sect has never interacted with the Xia Family, so what business would Elder Zhao have with her?

In the drawing room, the elder held a teacup in his hands and took a small sip. When he raised his head, he found a lady dressed in snow-white robes, gliding into the drawing room.

She had a pleasant smile on her face. It was soft and gentle and could make one's worries disappear.

"Lady Shiyun," Elder Zhao regained his senses as he smiled and rose from his seat, "Before my arrival, I've heard many tales that tell of how you are the most beautiful woman in the world. It would seem that the rumors are true. Indeed, no woman can be compared to your beauty."

Of course, Shiyun knew that these words were mere flattery. After all, there are many devastatingly beautiful women who lived on the mainland so no one could actually claim to be the greatest beauty in the world.

However, that doesn't mean that she could not enjoy a bit of flattery.

As such, after his speech, Shiyun smiled softly and replied, "Elder Zhao, what connections would the Weapon Refining Sect have with the Xia Family that you would come to pay me a visit? Furthermore, you did not ask to see my father. Why have you chosen to meet with me instead?"

"Lady Shiyun, only you can help me in this matter."

Elder Zhao smiled, "I want to ask you, Lady Shiyun, for your aid in our Second Master's quest to obtain the Xia Family! So far, every single one of his plans had failed. Only you can help him now."

"Oh?"

Shiyun looked at Elder Zhao with the slightest hint of a smile, "Elder Zhao, you seem to have overestimated my abilities. I'm afraid that I cannot help you in this matter."

"Hehe," Elder Zhao chuckled, "I've heard that relations between the Weapon Refining Sect and the Dongfang Family are strained, it would seem that the two sides had been feuding for many years. Now, if the Weapon Refining Sect were to receive support from the Xia Family, then we could join forces and destroy the Dongfang Family. With the current Master Xia in charge, this would never happen. After all, the Xia Family, which has remained secluded in Heaven City, would never willingly trample into muddy waters. But if the Second Master were to be put in charge, he would certainly be able to send aid to the Weapon Refining Sect and help you to defeat the Dongfang Family."

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